

# AFTER PARADISE

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# AFTER PARADISE

OR LEGENDS OF EXILE.



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OR LEGENDS OF EXILE

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

ROBERT, EARL OF LYTTON

(OWEN MEREDITH)

AUTHOR'S EDITION

BOSTON

ESTES & LAURIAT

1887

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# THE TITLARK'S NEST.

A PARABLE.



# THE TITLARK'S NEST.

## A PARABLE.

“Introite, nam et huic dei sunt.”

*Apud Gellium.*



### I.

WHERE o'er his azure birthplace still the smile  
Of sweet Apollo kindles golden hours,  
High on the white peak of a glittering isle  
A ruin'd fane within a wild vine's bowers  
Muffled its marble-pillar'd peristyle ;  
As under curls, that clasp in frolic showers  
A young queen's brow, her antique diadem's  
Stern grandeur hides its immemorial gems.

## 2.

The place was solitary, and the fane

Deserted save that where, in saucy scorn

Of desolation's impotent disdain,

The revelling leaves and buds and bunches born  
From that wild vine along a roofless lane

Of mouldering marble columns roam'd, one morn  
A titlark, by past grandeur unopprest,  
Had boldly built her inconspicuous nest.

## 3.

And there where girt by priests and devotees

A god once gazed upon the suppliant throng,  
Wild foliage waved by every wandering breeze

Now shelter'd one small bird ; to whose lone song,  
Companion'd by no choral minstrelsies,

An agèd shepherd listen'd all day long.  
Unlearn'd the listener and untaught the lay,  
But blithe were both in their instinctive way.

4.

Thither once came a traveller who had read  
    Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, and had all  
The terms of architecture in his head,  
    Apophyge, and plinth, and astragal.  
He, from below, had in its leafy bed  
    Spied out the carcass of an antique wall,  
Keen as, from heaven, the hovering condor spies  
Where, in the pampas hid, a dead horse lies.

5.

“ Pelasgian? Nought doth old Pausanias say  
    About this ruin, and I find no plan  
Or note of it in learnèd Caylus ; nay,  
    I doubt not it was miss'd by Winckelmann.  
The prize is mine. No joke, this hot noon-day,  
    To climb yon hill ! But Science leads the van  
Of Enterprise ; and now's the chance to shame  
The English Elgin's cheaply-purchased fame.

## 6.

“Ho, you there, yonder in the bramble-bush !”

The tired explorer to the shepherd cried,

“A drachma for thy guidance, friend !” But “Hush !”

The grey-hair’d herdsman of the hills replied.

Then, pointing upward to the leafage lush

That rippled round the ruin’d fane, with pride

He added “Hark, where yonder leaves are swinging,

The god’s voice from his sanctuary singing !”

## 7.

The traveller laugh’d. “’Tis a *curruca* small,

The *Orphea*, I surmise, whose note we hear.

Her nest is haply in yon temple wall.

An earlier songstress she, and sings more clear,

Than her small northern cousin whom we call

*Atricapilla Sylvia*. But I fear,

My worthy friend, we must not deem divine

Each vagrant voice that issues from a shrine.”



8.

“ Yet,” said the old man, with a pensive smile,

“ I heard my mother tell when I was young  
(And she, Sir, was a daughter of this isle)

How everything that's here had once a tongue,  
In the old times. Myself, too, many a while

Have heard the streamlets singing many a song,  
And, tho' their language was unknown to me,  
The reeds were moved by it, as I could see.

9.

“ Sir, when I was a boy I pastured here

My father's goats which now, Sir, are mine own.  
For he is underground this many a year,

But he had lived his life, and Heaven hath shown  
Much goodness to us, and my children dear

Are all grown up ; and, musing here alone,  
Oft have I wonder'd ‘ Could this temple break  
Long silence, in what language would it speak ? ’

## 10.

“ Full sure was I that if it spoke to me,  
Whate’er its language, I should understand.  
Then, I was young : and now, tho’ old I be,  
When sweet in heaven above the silent land  
That voice I hear, my soul feels glad and free,  
And I am fain to bless the god’s command,  
With welcome prompt responding to the voice  
He sends from heaven to bid my heart rejoice.

## 11.

“ Ah, not in vain its message have I heard !  
And, Sir, tho’ it may be, as you aver,  
The voice comes only from a little bird,  
Whose name, indeed, I never heard of, Sir,  
And tho’ I doubt not aught by you averr’d,  
For you, Sir, seem a learnèd traveller,  
Yet still the temple that contains the song  
A temple is, and doth to God belong.

## 12.

“And haply to the little bird I hear  
He may have said ‘I am myself too high  
For this poor man. Speak to him thou, speak clear,  
And tell him, little bird, that he may lie  
On consecrated ground and have no fear,  
But listen to thy messages, and try  
To understand.’ And I have understood,  
For when I listen, Sir, it does me good.”

## 13.

“Humph!” said the traveller, “Worthy friend, live long  
Ere yet thy children lay thee underground !  
Pasture thy goats in peace, and may the song  
Of many a titlark make thee pleasant sound,  
Warbled all day thy cottage eaves among.  
Such simple songs where simple hearts abound  
Fit place may find, but not in halls where hoar  
Poseidon haply held high state of yore.”

## 14.

“ Ay, Sir, it is but right,” the old shepherd said,

“ The little bird should to the god give place  
Whenever he returns. But where is fled

The sacred Presence that once deign’d to grace  
These lonesome haunts so long untenanted ?

Roam where you will, the sanctuaried space  
Is vacant, voiceless, priestless, unpossest,  
Save for the bird that in it builds her nest.

## 15.

“ Yet into this dead temple’s heart hath flown

A voice of life, and this else-silent shrine  
The bird whose nest is built in it hath known

How to make vocal. Thro’ the trembling vine  
Hark, the fresh carol ! Till to claim his own

The god returns in all his power divine,  
Still unforbidden let me hail the strain  
That haunts with living song the lifeless fane.”

LEGENDS OF EXILE.



FIRST SERIES.

MAN AND WOMAN.

“Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.”

PSALM viii.





I.

THE LEGEND OF POETRY.



I.

ADAM and Eve, cast out of Paradise,  
Wander'd along the wilderness forlorn,  
Till all its unfamiliar sands and skies  
Were one dim solitude without a bourne.  
Then Eve, outwearied, sank upon the ground ;  
And, where she fell, motionless she remain'd.  
Adam had climb'd a little barren mound  
A few steps farther. There he stood, and strain'd  
His backward gaze to the forbidden bound  
Of Eden. Still their banisht lord could see,  
Though faint in fading light, the happy bowers  
Where nevermore his fallen mate and he  
Might roam or rest, renewing griefless hours ;  
And Adam groan'd.

Meanwhile, unheard, unview'd,  
Jehovah's arm'd Archangel, from the gate  
He had shut forever, adown the solitude  
And darkness of that world all desolate  
The footsteps of the fugitives pursued.

Sudden he stood by Adam's side, and said,  
"Man, thou hast far to go. It is not good  
To look behind thee. Forward turn thy head !  
Thither thy way lies." And the man replied  
"I cannot." "What thou canst thou knowest not,"  
The Archangel answer'd, "for thou hast not tried.  
But trial is henceforth Man's earthly lot,  
And what he *must* he *can* do." Adam cried  
"What must I?" "Thou hast set aside God's word,  
But canst not," said the Angel, "set aside  
Necessity ; whose bidding, tho' abhorr'd,  
Obey thou must." And Adam ask'd in awe

“Is then Necessity another Lord?”

The Angel answer'd “’Tis another Law.”

“Another Law! But me thy sweeping sword

Hath left not,” Adam mutter’d, “hap what may,

Another Paradise to forfeit still.

What if that other Law I disobey?”

“Thou canst not,” sigh’d the Seraph, “for thy will

Hath lost its freedom, which was yesterday

A part of Paradise. For good or ill

Necessity controls it. Wretch, thou art

Weary already, and thou fain wouldst sleep,

Yet sleep thou dost not, tho’ thine eyelids smart

With the unwilling vigil they must keep;

’Tis thy necessity to think and wake.

To-morrow, thou wouldst wake and think. In vain!

Slumber unwill’d thy thoughts shall overtake,

And sleep thou shalt, tho’ sleep thou wouldst not. Pain

Thou wouldst avoid, yet pain shall be thy lot.

Thou wouldst go forth—Necessity forbids,  
Chains fast thy weakness to one hated spot,  
And on thy shut wish locks her iron lids.  
Thou wouldst know one thing, yet shalt know it not.  
Thou wouldst be ignorant of another thing,  
Yet canst not choose but know it. Unforgot  
To thy reluctant memory shall cling  
What thou wouldst fain forget, forgotten fleet  
From foil'd remembrance on evasive wing  
What thou wouldst fain remember. Change or cheat  
Necessity, thou canst not."

Shuddering

Adam crouch'd low at the Archangel's feet,  
And cried "Whate'er I *must* be, and whate'er  
I *can* be, aid, O aid me, to forget  
What I no longer *may* be ! Even this bare  
Inhospitable wilderness might yet

To unremembering eyes seem all as fair  
As Eden's self, nor should I more repine  
Were I once more unable to compare."

"Poor wretch," the Angel said, "wouldst thou resign  
All that remains to thee of Paradise?"

"Of Paradise is anything still mine?"

Sigh'd Adam, and the Angel answer'd "Yes,  
The memory of it." "Thence," he groan'd, "arise  
My sharpest torments. I should suffer less  
If I could cease to miss what I survive."

"Wouldst thou the gift, then, of forgetfulness?"

The Seraph ask'd. And Adam cried, "Give! give!"

With looks uplift, that search'd the deeps of heaven,  
Silent the Angel stood, till, as it were,  
In response from the source of glory given  
To that seraphic gaze, which was a prayer,  
Reorient thro' the rifted dark, and high

O'er Eden, rose the dawn of such a day  
As nevermore man's mourning eyes shall bless  
With beauty that hath wither'd from his way,  
And gladness that is gone beyond his guess.  
The panting Paradise beneath it lay  
Beatified in the divine caress  
Of its effulgence ; and, with fervid sigh,  
All Eden's folded labyrinths open'd wide  
Abysm within abysm of loveliness.  
Thither the Archangel pointed, and replied :  
“ Adam, once more look yonder ! Fix thine eye  
Upon the guarded happiness denied  
To the denial of its guardian law.  
Contèmples thy lost Eden—the last time ! ”  
  
And Adam lifted up his face, and saw  
Far off the bowery lawns and blissful streams  
Of Eden, fair as in his sinless prime,



And fairer than to love forbidden seems  
The long'd-for face whose lips in dreams requite  
Adoring sighs that, save in passionate dreams,  
Are disallow'd idolatries. Dark night  
Elsewhere above the lifeless waste was spread,  
As o'er a dead face the blindfolding pall.  
"Seest thou thy sinless past?" the Angel said.  
And Adam moan'd, "All, all ! I see it all,  
And know it mine no more !"

His helmèd head,  
As in obedience to some high command  
Deliver'd to him by no audible word,  
The Archangel bow'd. Then, with decisive hand,  
He seized and drew his formidable sword.  
Thro' night's black bosom burn'd the plunging brand ;  
Two-edgèd fires, the lightnings of the Lord,  
Flasht from its fervid blade, below, above,  
And, where their brilliance thro' the darkness broke,

Clear from the zenith to the nadir clove  
Man's sunder'd universe. At one dread stroke  
'The Archangelic sword had hewn in twain  
The substance of Eternity.

There ran  
'The pang and shudder of a fierce surprise  
'Thro' Adam's soul ; and then he slept again  
As he had slept before, when he (likewise  
In twain divided—Man and Woman) began  
His double being.

Upon the night-bound plain,  
In two vast fragments, each a dim surmise,  
Eternity had fallen—one part toward man,  
'The other part toward man's lost Paradise.  
'The light of Eden by its fall was crost,  
And in its shadow vanisht—save one gleam  
Of faintly-lingering glory that was lost  
In Adam's slumber, and became—A Dream.

\*

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Adam had lost his memory by the stroke  
Of that celestial sword's transfixing flame,  
And so forgot his dream when he awoke.  
Yet did its unremember'd secret claim  
Release from dull oblivion's daily yoke  
In moments rare. He knew not whence they came,  
Nor was it in his power to reinvoke  
Their coming : but at times thro' all his frame  
He felt them, like an inward voice that spoke  
Of things which have on earth no utter'd name ;  
And sometimes like a sudden light they broke  
Upon his darkest hours, and put to shame  
His dull despondency, his fierce unrest,  
His sordid toil, and miserable strife.  
These rare brief moments Adam deem'd his best,  
And call'd them all *THE POETRY OF LIFE.*



ii.

THE LEGEND OF MUSIC.



## II.

IN that dread instant when Eternity  
Was by the Angel's sword asunder riven,  
There sounded from the starry deep a cry  
That shook the constellated poles of heaven :

“ Elohim ! Elohim ! what hast thou done,  
Whose sword hath hewn Eternity in twain ?  
One part of it is now the Past, and one  
The Future (phantoms both, exempt from pain  
By lifeless unreality alone !)  
And the pang'd Present, like an open wound,  
Between them gapes, lest aught should close again  
What thou hast cloven.”

To this poignant sound  
The Seraph, leaning on his sword down-slanted,  
Listen'd, and in compassion or disdain  
Smiled gravely, as he murmur'd "It is well.  
The Reign of Time begins, man's prayer is granted."

Then loud he call'd to the Abyss of Hell,  
"Stunn'd rebels, rouse your swooning hosts, and rise,  
Tho' thunder-smitten, from the Penal Pit !  
Time's ravageable realm wide open lies  
For your invasion, and the spoils of it  
To you no more Eternity denies.  
Find in its painful fields your pasture fit,  
Be every pulse of consciousness your prey,  
And chase the panting moment as it flies !"  
Hell to the invocation answer'd "Yea !"  
And, pour'd in surge on surge of flame-pulsed cries,  
The fervid rush of her Infernal Powers



Sounded like roaring fire, tho' sightless they  
As midnight storms.

“ Eternity is dead !  
And Time, the quivering corpse of it, is ours !  
And from Eternity's death-wound,” they said,  
“ Fast, fast, the life-drops fall—days, minutes, hours,  
Drop after drop, with world on world, away—  
Into the final nothingness at last !  
To-day sinks swooning into yesterday,  
The future disappears into the past.  
Eternity lies lost in what hath been  
And is no more, or in what is not yet ;  
For all the rest is but a sigh between  
A hovering fear and a forlorn regret.  
And every moment but begins in vain  
A world that is with every moment ended ;  
For broken is Eternity in twain,  
And never shall Eternity be mended.”

.

This sullen pœan waked, where'er it went  
Around the rolling world, responsive sounds  
Of wrath and pain ; as if all passions pent  
In some titanic soul had burst the bounds  
Of individuality, and blent  
Their personal essence with the mindless might  
Of universal forces. First, there came  
Ominous suspirations, tremours slight  
Of sleepy terror, from the shuddering pores  
And joints and sockets of earth's giant frame ;  
Anon, Behemoth, bellowing, with fierce roars  
Shook all his chains. The mountains, rack'd and  
pang'd  
By earthquake, thunder'd from their fiery cores ;  
From smitten crag to crag the cataracts clang'd ;  
The sharp rain hiss'd ; the ocean howl'd ; the shores  
Shriek'd ; and the woods tumultuously twang'd  
Their wailing harps. But what was felt and heard

Thro' all that uproar's dissonant hurricane  
Was not the inarticulate noise alone  
Of winds and waves and woods and mountains stirr'd  
To screaming storm ; there was a mystic strain  
Of spiritual agony, a tone  
Of conscious torment, mingled with the train  
Of those unconscious sounds,—the personal moan  
Of some invisible being's passionate pain.

Wild as the roar of an uprooted world  
Wrench'd from its orbit, round the Dream of Man  
This swarm of demon discords roll'd and swirl'd.  
Thro' Adam's slumber, as it hurtled by,  
Its sounds were scatter'd ; and his dream began  
Dimly to shape beneath his sleep-shut eye  
Weird wavering images that were, or seem'd,  
The echoes of those sounds made visible.  
So that to Adam's soul the dream he dream'd

Was even as if on some vast curtain fell  
Troops of stupendous shadows in the glare  
Shed o'er it from a mighty furnace, lit  
Behind the back of one who, to his chair  
Fast chain'd, with wistful eyes peruses it,  
Wondering what sort of unseen beings are those  
Whose phantoms thro' the glory come and go :  
For of them nothing more the watcher knows  
Than the huge shadows they, in passing, throw  
Athwart the lurid curtain ; nor whence flows  
The light those shadows darken, doth he know.\*

Still smiled the Seraph. Slow, in circuit wide,  
Around the sphere of Adam's dream he drew  
The solemn splendours of his sword, and cried  
“ Thus far, no farther ! ” The Infernal Crew  
In vain to storm that æry circle tried,

---

\* Plato.—*Republic*. Book vii.

And round it hoarse their grovelling hubbub grew,  
Reluctantly beginning to subside  
In sullen howls and stifled bellowings.

Then cried the Angel, "Waken, also, you  
That slumber in the silence of sweet things,  
Voices of Consolation ! and pursue  
From hour to hour with your fond welcomings  
That promise fair the fleeting hours renew !  
Come hither from the hidden heavens that are  
Your homes on earth ! Come, with the south winds,  
hither

From rosy kingdoms of the Vesper Star !  
Come, with the sunrise, from the golden ether !  
Come with the cushat's goodnight coo, from bowers  
Bathed in the tender dews of eventide,  
Or with the hymn that to the matin hours  
The laverock sings in glory unespied !

Ripple light music of the restless breeze  
Thro' murmurous haunts of sylvan oracles,  
And loose the secrets lisp'd by summer seas  
Into the husht pink ears of blushing shells !  
Come, with remember'd sounds of warbling stream,  
And whispering bough, from woodland cloisters !

Come,  
Consolers ! Enter here, and let the Dream  
That Man is dreaming be henceforth your home ! ”

To this appeal the answer linger'd long,  
And not a sound upon the darkness stirr'd  
Save the faint moanings of the Demon Throng.  
But a strange note, not theirs, at length was heard,  
A single timorous note of distant song,  
Like the first chirrup of a callow bird.  
Then, one by one, from here and there, arose  
Clear in the far-off stillness of the night

(As from the bosom of the twilight grows  
Star after star) a multitude of light  
But thrilling tones, a choral harmony  
Of silvery voices in symphonious scale ;  
Whose heavenward anthem peal'd from sky to sky,  
As " Hail ! " they sang, " Benignant Elohim, hail !  
The living soul of dead Eternity  
Thy rescuing sword hath free'd. From its dark prison  
Released at last, on pinions glorious  
Behold, that radiant Spirit is now arisen !  
And hark, how sweet the song it sings to us !  
How sweet the song, how fair the face ! for fled  
The hovering frown erewhile its aspect wore,  
And lo, the frigid features of the dead  
Are flusht with spiritual life ! No more  
Those eyes are cold, no more those lips are dumb,  
And ' Fear no more,' they sing, ' to gaze on me !  
Ye call'd me Fate when I was frozen numb

In the cold silence of Eternity,  
And then ye fear'd me : but my living home  
Henceforth is in the hearts of all who live.  
Fear me no more, then, for to you I come  
With an eternal gift that shall survive  
Fate's despot rule o'er Time's brief horoscope :  
Eternity is still the gift I give  
To all who trust me, and my name is Hope.'"

And "Ave! ave!" sang the Voices. "Thee  
We welcome, holy Hope, that from afar  
Dost bring the promise of sweet things to be,  
Forever sweeter than all things that are!  
Born flying, thy fair flight thou canst not stop,  
But into the sad hearts it leaves behind  
Thou dost, in passing, from thy pinions drop  
One spotless plume that, cherisht, keeps in mind  
The dear remembrance of its passage. We,



What can we give thee in return for this ?  
Take at their best, to save them, take with thee  
Our sweetest joys, our holiest hours ; whose bliss,  
To thy far kingdom borne away, shall be  
Better and brighter, holier still, and higher !  
Take also, Spirit of Eternity,  
What Time made ours, to make it thine—Desire ! ”

Closer and clearer the sweet Voices grew,  
Borne floating on their own song's rhythmic stream,  
Flutter'd round Adam's slumber, downward flew,  
And settled in the bosom of his dream.  
“ Rest there, Consolers ! ” the Archangel said,  
“ And you, Disturbers, strive as you have striven,  
And thou—dream on, poor Dreamer ! ”

Then he spread  
His spacious pinions, and return'd to heaven.

Out of the depths of Adam's dream, and clear  
All round it, those Consoling Voices pour'd  
Pure strains of silver sound, that fill'd the sphere  
Traced by the circuit of the Angel's sword.  
The Demon Powers, resentful, roused again  
Their turbulent cohorts to the overthrow  
Of this melodious bulwark, but in vain ;  
For there Hell's surges broke, and hoarse below  
Roll'd in tumultuary undertones  
Their weltering waves of passion and of pain,  
Goaded and groaning, as the smit sea groans  
When the storm's lash is on its livid mane.

Those sounds were heard in Heaven ; and, down the  
light

Of all the listening stars, celestial streams  
Of song flow'd, mingling with the troubled flight  
Of their fierce tones—as, while the torrent screams,

The calm moon, shining thro' a cloudless night,  
Belts his tost bosom with her tranquil beams.

And all these Voices, with the sounds that were  
Their instrumental slaves,—the Voices sweet  
Of Man's Consolers, hymning praise and prayer,  
The Voices of the Passions of the Pit,  
Earth's dread disturbers, clarions of despair,  
And the pure Voices of the Stars—contending  
With one another, pour'd the importunate tide  
Of their sonorous strife, in strains ascending  
Beyond the visible spheres, to where it sigh'd  
About the elemental boundary wall  
Which never, to the other unseen side,  
The swarming senses that man's soul enthrall  
May overpass. For shrouded there, serene  
And irresponsive to the strife of all  
The worlds of passion and of sense—unseen,

Unheard—He dwells, Who is, and wills, and knows.  
And there, its clamour calm'd, its vehement play  
Of contradictions quench'd in the repose  
Of a sublime accord whose spacious sway  
Husht its wild course to an harmonious close,  
Slowly the sounding tumult died away.

So, when all storms are spent, and Ocean's sleep  
Leviathan's loud voice invades no more,  
The wearied winds into the silent deep  
Drop the last echoes of his dying roar,  
And fold their heavy wings, and faintly creep  
To rest on some lone island's desert shore ;  
Where the huge billows in low waves subside,  
And the low waves in rippling shallows cease,  
While the lull'd halcyon on the slumbrous tide  
Broods, and the breathing stillness whispers "Peace!"

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When Adam waked, the sounds that in his dream  
Dream-woven forms had worn still haunted him.  
Not only to have heard them did he seem,  
But even to have seen them, in a dim  
Indefinite world that of life's earthly scheme  
The phantom protoplast appear'd. For there  
Some bliss beyond possession was the prize  
Relentless wrestlers strove to seize or share ;  
And o'er a battle-field of boundless size  
Hope and Desire with Terror and Despair,  
And Love and Faith with Hate and Doubt, contended ;  
Importunately rolling to and fro,  
In restless contradiction never ended,  
A Yes reverberated by a No.  
Infinite longing, infinite resistance,  
Infinite turmoil ! gaining now, now losing,  
And then again with passionate persistence  
Speeding the clamorous chase thro' vast, confusing,

Inextricable mazes ; but still ever,  
Beyond the strife of discords and the cry  
Of conflict, with inveterate endeavour,  
Tending towards a far off harmony.

And MUSIC was the name the dreamer gave  
To that dream-world's mysterious sounds. In vain,  
However, for long years did Adam crave  
To hear, in *this* world, *that* world's sounds again.  
And everywhere on earth he sought to find  
Or fashion images that might express  
The echoes of them lingering in his mind,  
But nought resembled their mysteriousness.

His sons grew up. Memorial words they wrote  
On sun-dried river-reeds in cunning rhymes,  
Or graved them on the rocks, that men might note  
Who went before them in the after times.

He praised their scripture, but he shook his head.  
“The higher language still lies out of reach,  
And sweet your rhymes, my sons ; but, ah !” he said  
“They are not music, only sweeter speech.”  
His sons took clay, and kneaded it with skill  
Into the images of beasts, and men,  
And gods. But “Music,” Adam murmur’d still  
“In form alone I find not.” Colour then  
To form they added—colour squeezed and ground  
From herbs and earths—and pictures rich they wrought  
Of man, his doings, and the world around.  
But not in these was found what Adam sought.  
“Things seen and known,” he said, “they mimic well,  
But all things known and seen are, I surmise,  
Themselves but pictures of invisible,  
Or echoes of unheard, infinities.  
Definite are words, forms, and colours, each :  
Music alone is infinite.”

And none

Of Adam's offspring understood that speech,  
Save Jubal only. Jubal was the son  
Of Lamech, whose progenitor was Cain.  
His life's ancestral consciousness of death  
Stretch'd each sensation to a finer strain ;  
Into his listening ear earth's lightest breath  
An infinite mystery breathed ; in every sound  
That mystery sent a message to his soul ;  
Nor could he rest till definite means he found  
Its messengers to summon and control.  
And what he sought by wistful ways unnumber'd,  
Searching, at last he found in things where long  
Had Music on the breast of Silence slumber'd,  
Waiting his summons to awake and throng  
The bronzen tubes he wrought with stops and vents,  
Or shells with silver lute-strings overlaid.



When Jubal play'd upon these instruments  
A visionary transport, as he play'd,  
Rose in each listener and reveal'd to him  
The beauty and the bliss of Paradise,  
The songs and splendours of the Seraphim.

Albeit these transports from a mere device  
Of wind-blown pipes in order ranged arose,  
Or strings that, smitten, render'd response sharp.

And Jubal was the father of all those  
Whose hand is on the organ and the harp.



III.

THE LEGEND OF LOVE.



### III.

EVE had heard all, but nothing had she seen :  
For, ere the Archangel's sword was drawn, dividing  
The oneness of Eternity, between  
The gates of Eden fraudulently gliding,  
Athwart the wilderness the Snake slid near.  
And, where beneath the weight of one day's ill  
Fallen she lay, into the woman's ear  
He whisper'd, " Look not ! utter not ! lie still ! "  
Eve heard, and at his bidding still she lay,  
Nor look'd, nor utter'd.

In the woman's eyes

Thus linger'd a reflection of what they

Last look'd on ere she closed them—Paradise.  
For all the Archangel's weapon shore away  
From Man's perception was what lay before  
The gaze of Adam when that sword's sharp ray  
(Rending his cloven consciousness in twain)  
Parted the Present from the Past. But o'er  
The loveliness that in their looks had lain  
When last on Eden from afar she gazed,  
The lids of Eve were fallen ere (for bane  
Or blessing) Adam's granted prayer erased  
For ever from the records of his brain  
Each memory of Paradise.

And there,  
In Eve's shut eyes whate'er on earth is left  
Of Eden—faint reflections of it, fair  
Fallacious phantoms of a bliss bereft  
Of all reality—escaped the stroke

That from remembrance all the rest dispell'd.  
So Adam in Eve's eyes, when he awoke,  
Vague semblances of Paradise beheld ;  
And that lost gleam of Eden's light that still  
Dreamlike and dim in his own being dwelt  
Responded to them with a mystic thrill,  
Tho' Adam understood not what he felt.

And still Eve's daughters in their looks retain  
Those mirror'd mockeries their mother's eyes  
Bequeath'd them, tho' the Paradise they feign  
Is now a long-forbidden Paradise.

Reveal'd in Woman's gaze Man seems to see  
The wisht-for Eden he hath lost. He deems  
That Eden still in Woman's self must be,  
And he would fain re-enter it. His dreams  
Are kindled, by the mystic light that lies  
In these sweet looks, to fervid wishfulness ;

And, missing what he ne'er hath known, he sighs  
For what, itself, is but a sigh—the bliss  
Which there he seeks, and there is lost again.

No more, O nevermore, those steps of his,  
Whose progress is but a progressive pain,  
The Paradise they seek may reach and rove !  
Yet still the search is sweet, albeit in vain ;  
It lasts for ever, and men call it LOVE.



IV.

THE LEGEND OF THE IDEAL.



#### IV.

WHEN, at the archangelic bidding (blest  
With one brief vision of his happy past  
In all the lost delights of Eden drest)  
Adam on Paradise had look'd his last,  
There every form of loveliness beloved  
Whose beauty, dear to his adoring eye,  
Had breathed delight thro' all the haunts of yore,  
And clothed in gladness all the days gone by,  
The man beheld, save one.

For Eve no more  
Among the abandon'd bowers of Eden moved.  
Eden was Eveless.

Thus, Man's memory  
Of Woman as in Paradise she was  
The archangelic sword had not transfixt.  
This memory made in Adam's mind, alas,  
A visionary image, vaguely mixt  
With that stray glimpse of Eden's light that fell  
Into his slumber, and became a dream,  
The dream of Adam's life. And there, too well  
Remember'd, with her beauty's phantom gleam  
Mocking him, moved the Eve of Paradise ;  
Immeasurably fairer than the Eve  
That walk'd by Adam's side with sullen sighs  
And faded cheek—condemn'd, like him, to grieve  
And to grow old ; like him, to brave the  
bleakness  
Of life's long desert ; and, with him, to share  
The weight of many a burden, borne in meekness  
Or borne in bitterness, still hard to bear ;

An earthly woman, with a woman's weakness,  
A woman's faults.

That phantom, faultless fair,  
(The unforgotten Eve of Paradise,  
Beautiful as he first beheld her there,  
Ere any tear had dimm'd her glorious eyes)  
Long after Paradise itself had been  
By him forgotten, haunted Adam's gaze.  
And Adam made comparison between  
The faithful partner of his faultful days,  
Who stray'd, and sinn'd, and suffer'd by his side,  
And that imagined woman. With a sigh,  
Her unattainable beauty, when he died,  
Adam bequeath'd to his posterity,  
Who call'd it *THE IDEAL*.

And Mankind  
Still cherish it, and still it cheats them all.  
For, with the Ideal Woman in his mind,

Fair as she was in Eden ere the Fall,  
Still each doth discontentedly compare  
The sad associate of his earthly lot ;  
And still the Earthly Woman seems less fair  
Than her ideal image unforgot.

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And Adam slept and dream'd and waked again  
From day to day, from age to age. Apace  
Time trod his self-repeating path. To Men  
Man grew, and Adam became Adam's Race.

The Race of Adam, by his granted prayer  
Born as it was oblivious of life's source,  
Went onward, lighted only here and there  
And now and then, along its eyeless course,  
By visionary flashes brief and rare  
Of unexplain'd remembrance, that appear'd

Vague prescience. For the goal whereto Man goes  
Is his recover'd starting-point—tho', rear'd  
In a profound forgetfulness, he knows  
No longer whence or whither winds the track  
His steps have enter'd, and so lives like those  
Who, dreaming, dream not that sleep leads at last  
To waking, that to wake is to come back,  
And that what seems the Future is the Past.

But round that Ghost of Human Loveliness  
Which over Human Life's unlovely way  
Hover'd afar, evading the caress  
It still invoked, the reminiscent ray  
Of Eden's glory (lost in Adam's Dream  
And mingled with his soul) so shone and glow'd,  
That on Man's spirit the reflected gleam  
Of its divine effulgence oft bestow'd  
A supersensuous potency of sight,

Piercing, without an effort of his will,  
The Universal Veil that dims the light  
Of Universal Truth. A teeming thrill  
Of recognition thro' his senses ran  
From things that power reveal'd to him : and he  
To Nature cried, "Behold thy missing plan !  
For is not this what thou hast tried to be ?"  
Whereto, from all her conscious deeps, to Man  
Nature responded, "Yes !"

In toil and pain

At other times, by other ways, Man's wits  
Search after knowledge, but can ne'er attain  
The flying point that on before him flits.  
For he is as a voyager in vain  
Sailing towards horizons that recede  
From phantom frontier lines of sky and main,  
With furtive motion measured by the speed  
Of their pursuer. But wherever shines



That sudden ray of reminiscence rare,  
There, and there only, the convergent lines  
Of the orb'd Universe shut fast, and there  
Man's knowledge rests, untravell'd, at the goal.  
For, be it ne'er so trivial, ne'er so mean,  
The one becomes the All, the part the Whole,  
When, thro' them both, what each conceal'd is seen.

And age by age, man after man essaying  
To fix for endless worship and delight,  
In shrines of permanence for ever staying,  
These gleams of truth for ever taking flight,  
Men fashion'd forth new forms of Time and Space,  
Idealising both. The work they wrought  
In Space was Beauty, and in Time 'twas Grace.  
These two ideals everywhere they sought ;  
But the ideal human form and face  
Were still the fairest, still the loveliest.

And still thro' human action, human thought,  
And most of all thro' human love, men's quest  
With fondest fervour roams to find the sphere  
Of that Ideal World wherein the part  
Includes the Whole, the one the All. For there  
Men are to Man transform'd, and life to Art.

SECOND SERIES.

MAN AND BEAST.

"Thou hast put all things under his feet : all sheep and oxen,  
yea, and the beasts of the field."

PSALM viii.



I.

THE LEGEND OF THE ELEPHANT.



I.

ONE day when Adam, as he dug the ground,  
Lifted his forehead to wipe off the sweat  
That dript upon his labour, gazing round  
He saw (and at that sight his fear was great)  
A mountain moving toward him.

Sore afraid,  
Adam fell prostrate and began to pray.  
For every time that Adam fear'd he pray'd,  
And every thing he fear'd he worshipt. Grey  
And great, this formidable mountain made

Gravely along the plain its gradual way,  
Till over Adam hover'd its huge shade.  
Then, in a language lost for ever and aye,  
The Mountain to the Man, reproachful, said—  
“Dost thou not know me, Adam?”

“Mountain, nay,”

The Man replied, “nor did I ever see  
A mountain move, as thou dost. Yesterday  
I met a mountain, but 'twas unlike thee,  
Far larger, and it lay athwart my track,  
Nor moved altho' I bent to it my knee,  
So on I pass'd over the mountain's back.  
Was that a sin? So many sins there be!  
And art thou come to punish it, alack,  
By marching on mine own back over me?”

“Adam,” the Mountain answer'd him, “arise!



Not at my feet thy place is. Whence this dread?  
Alas, when we were still in Paradise  
Fast friends were we." But Adam hung his head,  
And mutter'd, "Friends? I know not what that is.  
Why dost thou persecute me, and pursue?  
Is Paradise a wilderness like this?  
I know it not, and thee I never knew."  
"Well didst thou know me once, when we were there,"  
The Mountain answer'd, "nor canst thou deny  
'Twas thou who gavest me the name I bear."  
But Adam, crouching, cried, "It was not I!  
I never gave thee anything at all.  
What wouldst thou? worship? sacrifice? roots? grain?  
Take, and begone! Mountain, my store is small."  
  
And sullenly the savage turn'd again  
To the hard labour of his daily lot.

By this the pitying Elephant perceived  
That Adam in the desert had forgot  
His happier birthplace. The good beast was grieved ;  
And "Those," he said, "whom thou rememb'rest not  
Remember thee. We could not live bereaved  
Of thy loved presence, and from end to end  
Of Eden sought thee. When thou didst not come  
We mourn'd thee, missing our great human friend,  
And wondering what withheld him from his home.  
I think the fervour of our fond distress  
Melted the battlements of Paradise.  
They fell, and forth into the wilderness  
We came to find thee. For who else is wise  
As thou art? and we hold thee great above  
Our greatest. Why hast thou forsaken us  
For this drear desert? Was not Eden best?  
Unsweet the region thou hast chosen thus!  
Yet less forlorn than loss of human love

Hath left the bowers by love in Eden blest.  
So where thou dwellest shall our dwelling be,  
Since joy from Eden went when thou wert gone,  
And where thou goest we will go with thee.  
To tell thee this the others sent me on."

Adam look'd up alarm'd, and trembling cried,  
"What others? Then I am indeed undone!  
More Elephants like thee?" The beast replied,  
"Alas, hast thou forgotten everyone  
Of thine old followers, the blithe beasts that were  
Thy folk in Paradise? which for thy sake  
We have abandon'd, and are come to share  
Thy labour, and near thine our lodging make.  
For Man completes us all, whate'er we be,  
And to his service faithfully we pledge  
Our several forces. Leaves unto the tree  
They garment, feathers to the wing they fledge,

Wings to the bird they bear, and hands to thee,  
Belong not more than we for Man were made.  
So if thou sufferest we will suffer too,  
And if thou toilest we thy toil will aid,  
And we will be thy loving servants true,  
And thou shalt be our master."

Adam said

Nothing. A mist that, melting, turn'd to dew  
Was in his eyes. He could not speak a word.  
That wretched savage grovelling in the dust,  
Whose rebel will had disobey'd the Lord,  
Whose coward heart had lost both love and trust,  
Whose dull despair had from his blinded eye  
Effaced the Past, and to the Present left  
Nothing but degradation utterly  
Of nobler reminiscences bereft,  
What could he answer ?

Nothing did he say ;

But sank down silent on the desert earth,

And, sinking, flung the rough-hewn flint away,

Wherewith he had been digging its hard dearth.

Then closer to the gentle beast he crept,

And hid his face between his hands, and wept.



II.

THE LEGEND OF THE ASS.





## II.

THE Elephant then lifted up on high  
His waving trunk, and trumpeted a clear  
Sonorous summons. With responsive cry  
To that glad signal, all the beasts drew near,  
And stood round Adam who was weeping still.  
Not one faint word of welcome did he say ;  
But all to comfort him employ'd their skill,  
And each beast gave him some good gift. For they,  
When forth from Paradise they went to find  
Its unforgotten lord, had brought away

As many of the treasures left behind  
By Man as each could carry.

So that day  
(Thanks to the beasts, who had preserved them) he  
Some precious fragments of himself at length  
Recover'd, and became in some degree  
Human again. Proud consciousness of strength  
The Lion gave him. Honesty of heart  
The Dog. A vigilance that's never dull  
The Lynx bestow'd. The Beaver brought him art,  
The Eagle aspiration. Tenderness  
The Dove contributed, the Elephant  
Bénign sagacity, the Fox address.  
He gain'd a sturdy courage from the Bull :  
And, all combining to supply Man's want,  
Each beast and bird in tribute bountiful,  
Gave Adam something he had lack'd before.

He took whate'er they gave him, and began,  
As gift by gift he gather'd up the store,  
Slowly to feel himself once more a man.

One beast there was who let the others pass,  
Each with his tributary offering,  
Before him, patiently. It was the Ass.  
And when his turn came some good gift to bring,  
He seem'd to look for something in the grass,  
But did not offer Adam anything.

Caressingly, like an importunate child,  
Adam approach'd the Ass, whose shaggy head  
He fondled. "Gentle are thy looks and mild,  
Hast thou not brought me any gift?" he said.  
The Ass replied, "My gift is all unfit  
To offer thee." Adam was vexed, and frown'd.  
The Ass resumed "I am ashamed of it,

Although in Paradise this gift I found.  
No other beast to take it had a mind,  
And if I had not pick'd it from the ground  
I think it would have there been left behind."

The Man heard this not wholly without shame ;  
But still he answer'd from a greedy heart,  
"No matter ! give it to me, all the same."

Then said the Ass, " If of a mind thou art  
To share with me mine all, I do but claim  
To keep a portion of it. Choose thy part "  
And in two parts he portion'd it. But those  
Two parts appear'd unequal. With the zest  
Of selfishness, Man, naturally, chose  
The biggest, thinking it must be the best.

But Adam, as his wont it was, chose wrong

For what the Ass (with a prophetic sense  
Perchance of his own need of it ere long)  
Had saved from Eden was BENEVOLENCE.  
When thus partition'd between Man and Beast,  
Benevolence its primal beauty lost ;  
And Adam's portion proved to be the least  
Benignant, tho' he fancied it the most.  
This fraction of Benevolence began,  
When mingled with Man's character, alas,  
To be Stupidity ; and, scorn'd by Man,  
'Tis Patience that has rested with the Ass.



III.

THE LEGEND OF THE DEAD LAMBS.





### III.

DEATH, tho' already in the world, as yet  
Had only tried his timorous tooth to whet  
On grass and leaves. But he began to grow  
Greedier, greater, and resolved to know  
The taste of stronger food than such light fare.  
To feed on human flesh he did not dare,  
Till many a meaner meal had slowly given  
The young destroyer strength to vanquish even  
His restless rival in destruction, Man.  
Meanwhile, on lesser victims he began  
To test his power : and in a cold Spring night

Two weanling Lambs first perish'd from his bite.  
The bleatings of their dam at break of day  
Drew to the spot where her dead Lambkins lay  
The other beasts. They, understanding not,  
In wistful silence round that fatal spot  
Stood eyeing the dead Lambs with looks forlorn.

Adam, who was upon the march that morn,  
Missing his bodyguard, turn'd back to see  
What they were doing ; and there also he  
Saw the two frozen Lambkins lying dead,  
But understood not. At the last he said,  
“ Since the Lambs cannot move, methinks 'twere best  
That I should carry them.”

So on his breast  
He laid their little bodies, and again  
Set forward, follow'd o'er the frosty plain

By his bewilder'd flocks. And in dismay  
They held their peace. That was a silent day.  
At night he laid the dead Lambs on the grass.  
That night still colder than the other was,  
And when the morning broke there were two more  
Dead Lambs to carry. Adam took the four,  
And in his arms he bore them, no great way,  
Till eventide. That was a sorrowful day.

But, ere the next, two other Lambkins died,  
Frost-bitten in the dark. Then Adam tried  
To carry them, all six. But the poor Sheep  
Said, "Nay, we thank thee, Adam. Let them  
sleep !

Thou canst not carry them. 'Tis all in vain.  
We fear our Lambkins will not wake again.  
And, if they wake, they could not walk—for see,  
Their little legs are stiffen'd. Let them be !"

So Adam left the Lambs. And all the Herd  
Follow'd him sorrowing, and not a word  
Was spoken. Never until then had they  
Their own forsaken. That was the worst day.

Eve said to Adam, as they went along,  
“Adam, last night the cold was bitter strong.  
Warm fleeces to keep out the freezing wind  
Have those six Lambkins thou hast left behind ;  
But they will never need them any more.  
Go, fetch them here ! and I will make, before  
This day be done, stout garments for us both,  
Lest we, too, wake no more.” Said Adam, loth  
To do her bidding, “Why dost thou suppose  
Our Lambs will nevermore have need of those  
Warm fleeces ? They are sleeping.” But Eve said,  
“They are not sleeping, Adam. They are dead.”  
“Dead ? What is that ?” “I know not. But I know

That they no more can feel the north wind blow,  
Nor the sun burn. They cannot hear the bleat  
Of their own mothers, cannot suffer heat  
Or cold, or thirst or hunger, weariness  
Or want, again." "How dost thou know all this?"  
Ask'd Adam. And Eve whisper'd in his ear,  
"The Serpent told me." "Is the Serpent here?"  
If here he be, why hath he," Adam cried,  
"No good gift brought me?" Adam's wife replied,  
"The best of gifts, if rightly understood,  
He brings thee, and that gift is counsel good.  
The Serpent is a prudent beast; and right!  
For we were miserably cold last night,  
And may to-night be colder; and hard by  
Those dead Lambs in their woolly fleeces lie,  
Yet need them not as we do. They are dead.  
Go, fetch them hither!"

Adam shook his head,  
But went.

Next morning, to the beasts' surprise,  
Adam and Eve appear'd before their eyes  
In woollen fleeces warmly garmented.  
And all the beasts to one another said,  
“ How wonderful is Man, who can make wool  
As good as Sheep's wool, and more beautiful ! ”

Only the Fox, who snift and grinn'd, had guess'd  
Man's unacknowledged theft : and to the rest  
He sneer'd, “ How wonderful is Woman's whim !  
See, Adam's wife hath made a sheep of him ! ”

IV.

THE LEGEND OF EVE'S JEWELS.





#### IV.

FROM that day forth Eve eyed with tenderness  
The Serpent, to whose craft she owed her dress.  
But “ More,” he whisper’d in her ear one day,  
“ Thou still mayst owe me, if it please thee. Say,  
Wouldst thou be fair ? ”

The woman smiled, “ Behold me !  
Am I not fair already ? ” “ Who hath told thee  
That thou art fair ? ” the Serpent ask’d. Again  
Eve smiled, and answer’d, “ Adam.” “ Ah, but  
when ? ”

He ask'd. And, this time sighing as she smiled,  
She said, "Before the birth of our first child."  
"I thought so," said the Serpent. "Long ago!"  
Eve's eyes grew tearful. She replied, "I know  
It was but yesterday I chanced to trace  
Reflected in a mountain pool the face  
That he had praised; and I was satisfied  
That certainly, unless the water lied,  
Adam was right." "*Was* right," the Serpent said,  
"So was last summer sweet." "Doth beauty fade?"  
Eve murmur'd. "Ay, with youth," said he. "And  
thou  
Canst make me young again?" "Not that. But how,  
When young no more, to make thee fair again  
I know a way." "What way?" said Eve. "Explain!"  
"It is," he answer'd, "by adorning thee."  
"And what wouldst thou adorn me with?" said she.  
"Myself!" he whisper'd.

Then the Serpent roll'd

His ruby-colour'd rings and coils of gold

Around the form of Eve : her neck enlaced,

And was a necklace ; girt her pliant waist,

And was a girdle ; with elastic bound

Above her knee his wistful clasp enwound,

And was a garter ; with repeated twist

Of twinkling chain entwined her tender wrist,

And was a bracelet. Last of all, her brow

He crown'd, and cried, " Man's Queen, I hail thee  
now ! "

Eve blusht. The sense of some new sexual power

Unknown to all her being till that hour,

Within it kindled a superb surprise.

Back, with half-open'd lips and half-shut eyes,

She lean'd to its rich load her jewell'd head.

And at her ear again the Serpent said,

“ By the bright blaze of thine adornment, see  
What in the years to come thy sex shall be !  
Mere female animal, much weaker than  
The male its master, not the Queen of Man,  
Scarce even his mate, that sex was born ; but more  
Than it was born shall it become. Such store  
Doth in it lurk of secret subtilty,  
Such seed of complex life, as by-and-by  
Shall grow into full Woman ; and, when grown,  
The Woman shall avenge, tho’ she disown,  
The Female, her forgotten ancestress.  
Mother of both, my glittering caress  
Now wakes beneath thy bosom’s kindled snow  
Whole worlds of Womanhood in embryo !  
A penal law controls Man’s fallen state.  
It’s name is Progress : and, to stimulate  
That progress to its destin’d goal, Decay,  
Woman, with growing power, shall all the way

Its course accompany—from happiness  
And ignorance to knowledge and distress ;  
From careless impulse to contrived device ;  
From spontaneity to artifice ;  
From simple to sophisticated life ;  
From faith to doubt, and from repose to strife.  
Whilst, still as Progress doth its prey pursue,  
The weaker shall the stronger-born subdue,  
Man subjugating first those monsters grim  
Whose strength is more than his ; then, Woman him :  
Tho' he born weaker than most beasts, and she  
Born weaker even than man's own weakness, be.  
So shall the Feminine Force that set him on  
Still keep him going till his course be done.  
Far hath he yet to travel his long way,  
But thou hast started him. And on the day  
He lost that Paradise he ne'er had won,  
Here was his progress, thanks to thee, begun.

That was Man's first step forward. I perceive  
He (thanks again to thee) is on the eve  
Of yet another. Good advice to him  
Thou gavest, whence he got his winter trim,  
So warm and stout. But at that fleecy coat  
The beasts, his unprogressive friends, I note,  
Begin to look suspiciously askance.  
And thence do I predict his next advance.  
'Twixt Man and Beast the inevitable strife  
Must needs enforce 'twixt Man and Man a life  
More artificial. And therefrom shall rise  
The Future Woman; form'd to civilize,  
Corrupt, and ruin, raise, and overthrow  
Cycles of social types that all shall owe  
To her creative and destructive sway  
Their beauty's blossom, and their strength's decay.  
Behold, then, in thyself the primal source  
Of Human Progress, and its latest force !

For, since from thee shall thy fair daughters, Eve,  
A subtler sex than all thy sons receive,  
Their beauty shall complete what thine began,  
Thou crown'd Queen Mother of the Queens of Man !”





V.

THE LEGEND OF FABLE.



V.

WITH many a plume and tuft of brilliant dye,  
And blushing berries twined in belt and tress,  
Eve on her clothing had begun to try  
What ornament could add to usefulness  
From day to day. But, as the days went by,  
The more she prized her borrow'd charms, the less  
She loved their owners who, approving not  
Those pilfer'd splendours, with resentful eye  
Beheld them all. For out the secret got,  
How from the bodies of the dead were torn  
The garments Eve and Adam gloried in :

And to the beasts, who were as they were born,  
It seem'd a scandal and a sort of sin  
That their own wool and fur should thus be worn  
By limbs not theirs. "Let each defend his skin!"  
They said to one another.

In those days

There was a little animal Eve yet  
Loved passing well ; for it had pleasant ways,  
Was smooth, and soft, and sleek; and seem'd to set  
A grateful store on her capricious praise.  
Curl'd in her lap 'twould nestle without fear,  
And let her stroke its back and bosom white,  
Until to Eve this beast became so dear  
That in its confidence she took delight:  
But, when the Herd discover'd that her dress  
Was stolen from their plunder'd kith and kin,  
Eve's little favourite fear'd each fresh caress  
Her hand bestow'd on it, and felt within

Its frighten'd heart a sharp mistrustfulness,  
For "If she took a fancy to my skin?"  
The creature mused. And ever from that date  
Its thoughts and looks were all alert to find  
Some means whereby it might escape the fate  
Whose horrid prospect hover'd vague behind  
Eve's fondling fingers. Once, when peering round,  
Inquisitively careful to explore  
All nooks and corners till such means were found,  
It spied a heap of fish-bones on the floor.  
Then, from Eve's lap down-sliding to the ground,  
It roll'd itself among them o'er and o'er  
Till it became a Porcupine. And "How  
To guard my skin," it chuckled, "nevermore  
Need I henceforth take any pains, for now  
My skin it is that will henceforth guard me!"

So in this unapproachable condition

Secure it lived : for its security  
Was even the same as Man's was—Arm'd Suspicion.

Suspicion everywhere ! No peace could be  
On earth henceforth. To war suspicion led.  
Long ages is it since that war began,  
And seas of blood have been on both sides shed,  
Yet still it lasts. In servitude to Man  
Some captived beasts survive. The Dog is one.  
But, just because the Dog to Man is true,  
From his approach his former comrades run,  
Deeming him traitor to their cause. Some few  
(The fiercest and the savagest alone)  
An intermittent and unequal strife  
Around their dens in desert lands pursue,  
And they and Man are enemies for life.  
Nor they and Man alone : for, confidence  
Once gone, the beasts upon' each other prey'd

Like beasts, without the plausible pretence  
Of good intentions by Man's nature made  
For his bad doings in the grim campaign  
'Twixt him and them. This so revolted her,  
That Justice from the world-wide battle-plain  
Fled blushing. Pity's flight was tardier :  
But, after lingering long in vain appeal  
From heart to heart, she follow'd Justice too,  
Where only bloodstains left behind reveal  
The paths whereby she fled from mortal view.

And they, the gentle Beasts of Paradise  
That were Man's once familiar intimates,  
Far from the menace of his murderous eyes  
Whither, O whither are they gone? The gates  
Of Paradise are shut for ever, and there  
No refuge for Man's victims, nor for him,  
Remains on earth. But, from the bowers that were

With Eden lost, the pitying Seraphim  
Sow'd in the waste one seed. A forest fair  
Sprang from it—giant trees of lusty limb,  
Long vaults of bloom and verdure never bare,  
Where forms, half-bird half-blossom, flash and swim  
From bough to bough, and, husht in windless air,  
Soft shadows flutter from the whisperous wings  
Of half-awaken'd dreams ; while all things there  
Seem slowly turning into other things,  
As, down the bowery hollows to the brim  
Of immemorial seas, melodious springs  
From undiscoverable sources bear  
Primeval secrets.

Deep into the dim  
But deathless shelter of that blest repair  
Those gentle beasts departed, and became  
Forthwith imperishably fabulous.



For History, that doth so loud proclaim  
And with such curiosity discuss  
Man's perishable life and course unstable,  
Of them and theirs knows nothing, and the name  
Of their unfading Forest Home is Fable.

Far off, and ever farther off from us,  
That Forest and the dwellers in it seem,  
As far and farther on we travel fast,  
And more and more like a remember'd dream  
Becomes the glimmering wonder of the Past.  
But, o'er a wingèd and four-footed folk  
Whose unsophisticated nature yields  
Spontaneous service to her even yoke,  
There Justice reigns revered ; there Pity shields  
An else defenceless flock ; and there do they  
Their joint tribunal hold, where every cause  
That in this human world hath gone astray,

And honest trial miss'd, by lovelier laws  
Than ours is welcomed to impartial test,  
All cases pleaded, be they what they may,  
All rights establish'd, and all wrongs redress'd.  
How far away it seems, how far away !

Yet one step only from the trodden track  
That to its daily pilgrims, every one,  
Appears to be the very zodiac  
The universe itself is travelling on,  
Let any man but turn aside, and lo !  
Around whatever path he chance to pace  
With steps unconscious of the way they go  
Far-reaching Fable's million-branch'd embrace  
Doth its unfathomable influence throw.

To him who tells these tales such chance befell  
Once on a time : and in that Forest old

(’Tho’ how he enter’d it he cannot tell)

With one whose face he may no more behold

Or there or here, he was beguiled to dwell

Full many a month. But few of his own kind,

Among the folk who there safe dwelling have,

To greet him or to guide him did he find.

Of these, the wisest was a Phrygian slave,

The holiest Assisi’s tender Saint.

Phœdrus upon the borders of the land

Sat listening ; and to him came echoes faint

From voices far within. His careful hand

On tablets smooth deliberately wrote

In unimpulsive verse, correctly plann’d,

All that thus reach’d him from a source remote.

But there, without restraint, from place to place

And led by none, tho’ follow’d by a band

Of Loves and Graces whose light steps kept pace

With his inimitably varied lay,

Free-footed went the witty Fabulist  
Of social France. And there our English Gay,  
Methodically playful, neither miss'd  
Nor much advanced his unadventurous way.

Howbeit along that dim and vast domain  
From the discourse of any one of these  
Scant guidance did its last explorer gain.  
There were so many more instructors ! Trees,  
Rocks, rivers, rainbows, clouds, dew, wind, and rain,  
No less than birds and beasts, that live at ease  
An unmolested life by hill and plain  
Throughout its vocal realms (where all that is  
Is all alive) have tongues, and talk as well  
As men or books ; nor do they take amiss  
The questions ask'd them, nor refuse to tell  
Their secrets to the souls that, lingering there,  
Have learn'd their language.

What this listener heard,  
There lingering long, he may not here declare.  
But many a tale to him by beast and bird  
In Fable Land imparted (if time spare  
The life of any purpose long deferr'd,  
Or to postponed occasion, when 'tis won,  
Recall an errant will's disbanded powers)  
Fain would he tell beneath the lingering sun  
Of months unborn, that hide midsummer hours  
Whose golden gossamers have not yet spun  
Their shining clues to still-unblossom'd bowers.



L'ENVOI.





## AD ÆSOPUM.



### I.

SAY, Æsop, wast thou born a slave,  
Who dost so freely speak ?  
Thy thoughts so upright and so brave !  
Thy back so bent and weak ?  
So ugly and so coarse thy face ?  
And, in thy fancies all, such grace !

### 2.

Did thy rude comrades play thee pranks,  
Thy master beat thee sore,  
Yet live to own with grateful thanks  
Thy wit had saved his store ?  
How fail'd such wit thyself to save  
From an unjust and cruel grave ?

## 3.

Hadst thou, indeed, a stammering tongue,  
Splay foot and limping walk,  
Whose children are so fair and strong ?  
Didst thou with Solon talk ?  
And didst thou sup with Crœsus too  
At Sardinian feasts ? Is all that true ?

## 4.

Vain questions ! Not to us nor thee,  
Dear Sage, it matters now  
If true or false the stories be  
Of what thou *wast* : for thou  
Art what we *are* : and all thou art  
We all receive, and all impart.

## 5.

Of thee, who knewst the world so well,  
Not much the world hath known :  
Thy voice to us doth only tell  
Our secrets, not thine own :  
But thou before us everywhere  
Hast been, and still we find thee there.

## 6.

Great Sire of Fable ! Age to age  
Extends, from north to south  
From east to west, thine heritage,  
That grows from mouth to mouth.  
And, with its growth still growing thus,  
Thou art thyself grown fabulous.



POEMS.



## TRANSFORMATIONS.

(A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.)



### I.

“ HERE at last alone,  
You and I together !  
All the night our own,  
And the warm June weather !  
Not a soul in sight !  
What we will, we may.  
Nothing is by night  
As it was by day.  
Look around you ! See,  
All things change themselves.  
Blossom, bower, and tree  
Turn to Fays and Elves ;  
Trivial things and common

Into rare things rising,  
Why should man and woman  
Be less enterprising?  
Fashion's formal creatures  
We till now have been,  
With prim-pattern'd features  
And a borrow'd mien.  
Now the mask is broken,  
Now the fetters fall,  
Wishes long unspoken  
Now are all in all!  
Wondrous transformation  
Now, for you and me,  
Waits our invocation.  
Say, what shall we be?"

## 2.

"What you will," said She.



## 3.

“ Look, then, and listen ! For you must be waiting,  
Behind a high grating,  
The sound of my signal. Along the wild land  
I have gallop’d full speed on my coal-black steed  
To free my love from my foeman’s hand,  
And lo ! in the moonlight alert I stand  
Close under the castle wall.  
Look out, I am here !  
Leap down, nor fear !  
For into my rescuing arms you fall,  
Safe and free. They are round you, see !  
One saddle must serve us, so cling to me well,  
And away, and away, thro’ the night we flee !  
But hark ! ’Tis the clang of the ’larum bell.  
Our pursuers awake. For dear life’s sake  
Cling to me closer, and closer still !  
And speed, speed, my coal-black steed !

They are hurrying after us over the hill.  
But clear'd is the river, and cross'd is the heath,  
Deep into the sheltering woods we dart,  
And O what a ride ! for I feel your breath,  
And how hot it burns ! and I hear your heart,  
And how loud it beats ! as I laugh ' We part  
No more, come life come death ! ' ”

## 4.

“ No, no,”  
She sigh'd, “ not so !  
Too fiercely fleets your coal-black steed,  
And pleasure faints in passion's speed,  
And the bliss that lingers the best must be,”  
Sigh'd She.

## 5.

“ Listen, then, and look, once more !  
We are sailing round a southern island.

Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,  
Folded under many a moonlit highland.

Fragrant breathes the dusky shore,

And where dips the languid oar

Wavelets dimple flash and darkle,

Odours wander, fireflies sparkle :

Thro' them all our bark is gliding,

Gliding softly, gliding slowly :

Not a cloud their sweetness hiding,

All the heavens are husht and holy :

Midnight's panting pulse uncertain

Faintly fans the heaving curtain

O'er the silken-pillow'd seat

Where you lie with slipper'd feet,

Tresses loosed, and zone unbound ;

While, my ribbon'd lute unslinging,

I, your troubadour, beside you,

O'er its chords, that trembling sound,

Pour the song my soul is singing :  
List, and let its music guide you,  
Till the goal of dreams be found ! ”

## 6.

“ Ah, stay so ! ”

She murmur'd low,

“ Song and stream forever flow !

And, if this be dreaming, never

Let me wake, but dream for ever,

Dreaming thus, if dream it be ! ”

Then He :

## 7.

“ As night's magic blends together

Moonbeams, starbeams, odours, dews,

In a hush of happy weather,

Earth and heaven to interfuse ;

So my song draws softly down

All your soul into mine own,  
Bounteous gift on gift bestowing :  
First, that heaven, your face ; and then  
Heaven's divinest stars, those eyes  
Under dewy lashes glowing ;  
Last, those lips, whose smile caresses  
All their breath beatifies ;  
And the fragrance o'er me flowing  
From those downward-shaken tresses,  
Whose delicious wildernesses  
Hide such haunts of happy sighs ! ”

## 8.

“ Rise, ah rise ! ”

Faint She whisper'd. “ Hold me fast !  
For away the fixt earth flies,  
And I know not where we are.  
What is coming ? What is past ?

Bursting, flashing, fleeting, see,  
Swiftly star succeeds to star  
Till . . . . in what new world are we ? ”  
“ Love’s,” said He.

## 9.

“ Song and lute the spell obeying,  
Cease in silence sweeter, stronger,  
Than song-singing or lute-playing :  
And, entranced, I know no longer  
Whither are my senses straying :  
But I feel my spirit blending  
With the bliss of thine, and ending  
Tremulously lost in thee ! ”

## 10.

“ Hush ! ” sigh’d She,  
“ Lest this dream, if dream alone

And no more than dream it be,

By a breath should be undone.

For ah," She sigh'd,

" I and thou, what are we now ? "

And He replied,

" Thou art I, and I am thou,

And we are one ! "

## NORTH AND SOUTH,



## I.

FAR in the southern night she sleeps ;  
And there the heavens are husht, and there,  
Low murmuring from the moonlit deeps,  
Faint music lulls the dreamful air.  
No tears on her soft lashes hang,  
On her calm lips no kisses glow.  
The throb, the passion, and the pang  
Are over now.

## 2.

But I ? From this full-peopled north,  
Whose midnight roar around me stirs,  
How wildly still my heart goes forth  
To haunt that silent home of hers !  
There night by night, with no release,  
These sleepless eyes the vision see,  
And all its visionary peace  
But maddens me.



## ATHENS.

(1865.)



THE burnt-out heart of Hellas here behold !

Quench'd fire-pit of the quick explosive Past,  
Thought's highest crater—all its fervours cold,  
Ashes and dust at last !

And what Hellenic light is living now

To gild, not Greece, but other lands, is given :  
Not where the splendour sank, the after-glow  
Of sunset stays in heaven.

But loud o'er Grecian ruins still the lark

Doth, as of old, Hyperion's glory hail,  
And from Hymettus, in the moonlight, hark  
The exuberant nightingale !

## CINTRA.

(1868.)



1.

In the brake are creaking  
The tufted canes,  
And the wind is streaking  
With fugitive stains  
A welkin haunted by hovering rains.

2.

Low lemon-boughs under  
My garden wall,  
In the Quinta yonder,  
By fits let fall  
Here an emerald leaf, there a pale gold ball,

## 3.

On the black earth, studded  
With droplets bright  
From the fruit trees, budded,  
Some pink, some white,  
And now overflowed with watery light.

## 4.

For the sun, thro' a chasm  
Of the colourless air,  
With a jubilant spasm  
From his broken lair  
Upleaps and stands, for a moment, bare !

## 5.

But a breath bewilders  
The wavering weather ;

And those sky-builders  
That put together  
The vaporous walls of the cloud-bound ether

## 6.

From the mountains hasten  
In pale displeasure  
To mortice and fasten  
The bright embrasure,  
Shutting behind it day's innermost azure.

## 7.

On the bleak blue rim  
Of the lonesome lea,  
Shapeless and dim  
As far things at sea,  
Mafra yon nebulous clump must be !

## 8.

Across the red furrows  
    To where in the sides  
Of the hills he burrows  
    (As a reptile hides)  
The many-legg'd, long-back'd, aqueduct strides.

## 9.

Just over the pines,  
    As from tapers snuff'd,  
A thin smoke twines  
    Till its course is luff'd  
At the edge of the cliff, by the breeze rebuff'd;

## 10.

Whence, downward turning  
    A dubious haze,

(From the charcoal-burning)

It strays, delays,  
And departs by a dozen different ways.

## 11.

The chestnuts shiver,  
The olive trees  
Recoil and quiver,  
Stung by the breeze,  
Like sleepers awaked by a swarm of bees.

## 12.

Down glimmering lanes  
The grey oxen go :  
And the grumbling wains  
They drag onward slow  
Wail, as they wind in a woeful row,

## 13.

With fruits and casks  
To the seaside land,  
Where Colares basks  
In a glory bland,  
And from gardens o'erhanging the scented sand

## 14.

Great aloes glisten  
And roses dangle.  
But listen ! listen !  
The mule-bells jangle,  
Rounding the rock-hewn path's sharp angle.

## 15.

As their chime dies out  
The dim woods among,

With the ghostly shout  
And the distant song  
Of the muleteers that have pass'd along,

## 16.

From behind the hill  
Whence comes that roar,  
Up the road so still  
But a minute before ?  
"Tis a message arrived from the grieved sea shore.

## 17.

And, tho' close it seems,  
Yet from far away  
It is come, as in dreams  
The announcements they  
To the souls that can understand convey.



## 18.

For whenever you hear,  
As you hear it now,  
That sound so clear,  
You may surely know  
Foul weather's at hand, tho' no wind should blow.

## 19.

But the cork wood is sighing,  
It cannot find rest ;  
And the raven, flying  
Around his black nest,  
Hath signall'd the storm to the Sierra's crest.

## 20.

Plaintive and sullen,  
Penalva moans ;

The torrents are swollen ;  
The granite bones  
Of Cruzalta crackle with split pine cones ;

## 21.

Roused and uproarious  
The huge oaks yell  
Till the ghost of Honorius  
Is scared from his cell,  
Where not even a ghost could in quietude dwell ;

## 22.

For the woods all round  
Its cork-clad walls  
Are storm'd by the sound  
Of the waterfalls  
That have shatter'd their mountain pedestals.

23.

On the topmost shelf  
Of the Pena, fast  
As the rock itself,  
In a cluster vast  
Stood castle and keep but a moment past ;

24.

Now, in what to the sight  
Is but empty air,  
They are vanish quite,  
And the sharp peak, bare  
As a shaven chin, is upslanted there.

25.

Can a film of cloud,  
Like the fiat of Fate,

In its sightless shroud  
Thus obliterate  
The ponderous mass of a pile so great ?

## 26.

'Twas a fact, yet a breath  
Has that fact dispell'd.  
So truth, underneath  
A cloud compell'd  
To hide her head, is no more beheld.

## 27.

The achievement of years,  
By a minute effaced,  
Departs, disappears,  
And is all replaced  
By a cold blank colourless empty waste.

28.

All forms, alas,  
That remain or flee  
As the winds that pass  
May their choice decree,  
Stand faster far than have stood by me

29.

The man I served,  
And the woman I loved.  
But what if they swerved  
As their faith was proved,  
When a mountain can be by a mist removed ?

## SORRENTO REVISITED.

(1885.)



ON the lizarded wall and the gold-orb'd tree  
Spring's splendour again is shining ;  
But the glow of its gladness awakes in me  
Only a vast repining.

To Sorrento, asleep on the soft blue breast  
Of the sea that she loves, and dreaming,  
Lone Capri uplifts an ethereal crest  
In the luminous azure gleaming.

And the Sirens are singing again from the shore.  
'Tis the song that they sang to Ulysses ;  
But the sound of a song that is sung no more  
My soul in their music misses.

## FRAGRANCE.

(A SPRING BALLAD.)



## DEDICATION

TO —

HERE Spring with her gifts is come.  
 She hath given white buds to the hedge,  
 To the wandering swallow a home,  
 And a rose to your window ledge.  
 In return for the gifts she gave  
 A gift for herself she sought,  
 And I, of the best I have,  
 Gave to her a single thought.  
 That thought was a thought of you,  
 Spring laid it the leaves among,  
 There fed it on light and dew,  
 And return'd it to me in a song.  
 So the twice-given gift, as to me  
 Spring brought it, to you I bring :  
 For this song is the child of three,  
 Us two, and our playmate, Spring.

---

## BALLAD.

## I.

THE soul of all the souls that have become  
Sweet odours, I am Fragrance from afar.  
Deep hid in Beauty's bosom was my home,  
And known to me her inmost mysteries are.

## 2.

I know the secret of the Rose. She blushes,  
I know the reason why.  
A hopeless passion in her heart she hushes  
For the bright Beetle-Fly.  
He was a bold and brilliant cavalier :  
He woo'd her in the love-time of the year  
A livelong summer day :  
He woo'd her, and he won her : then betray'd her,  
And, breaking all the vows that he had made her,  
Upon a sky-built sunbeam sail'd away.



## 3.

Then the Rose wisht for wings to follow him,  
But all her wishings were of no avail.  
What she could do, she did. In pilgrim trim  
From bower to bower she wander'd down the dale,  
And climb'd and climb'd, and peep'd into the dim  
Nest of the Nightingale.

## 4.

The Nightingale beheld her, and averr'd  
That she was fairest of the fair. He said,  
“Fair crimson-wingèd creature, be a bird!  
And I with thee, and none but thee, will wed.”  
His amorous song the Rose resentful heard,  
And shook her head.

## 5.

Into that amorous song there slid a tear.  
The Rose was weeping, sad at heart was she.

But still the Nightingale with song sincere  
Sang to her in the twilight from the tree.

“ O wert thou but a bird ! thou art so dear,  
Thee would I mate with, and wed none but thee ! ”  
“ Nay,” sigh’d the Rose, “ I seek mine absent fere,  
A lover bold and born of high degree,  
My heart is sad because he is not here,  
Sir Scarabæus he ! ”

## 6.

The Evening Wind pass’d by, and heard her boast,  
And to the Rose he whisper’d, laughing low,  
“ Poor Rose, thine absent lover thou hast lost,  
For he is faithless, and forsaken thou !  
I met him on my travels at the Court  
Of Queen Spiræa of Ulmaria.  
The Meadow Queen is she, and all amert  
Sir Scarabæus, for her sake; that day

Had sworn to break a lance. The tilt was short,  
I left him lying wounded in the dust,  
And only know that, by the last report,  
Thy gallant had received a mortal thrust.  
Now all the common flowers that far and wide  
Have envied thee because thou art so fair  
Are laughing at thee. But whate'er betide,  
Come thou with me, and I will bring thee where  
Thou yet mayst find him in his fallen pride.”  
The poor Rose hung her head, and, in despair,  
“ Had I but wings !” she sigh’d,  
“ Had I but wings !”

## 7.

With laughter light again,  
“ Thou hast them,” that perfidious Wind replied,  
“ And I will show thee how to use them.” Then  
He breathed upon the Rose, and, undenied,

Pluckt from her one by one her petals fair ;  
But, soon dissatisfied  
With his sweet theft, along the thankless air  
He tost the stolen petals here and there,  
And off he hied.

## 8.

Me for himself he would have kept. But I  
Beheld thee, as the Evening Wind went by  
Bearing me with him. To the Wind I said  
“Wait for me !” and I slid into thy soul.  
When the Wind miss’d me he believed me dead,  
And so went on without me to his goal,  
Which he shall never reach, for every hour  
It changes.

From that moment I became  
The inmate of thy thoughts. I have the power  
To perfume all the paths they haunt. My name

Another's lips must teach thine own to spell.  
Untold I leave it, lest the Evening Star  
Should guess it in thine eyes. With thee to dwell,  
And thine to be for ever, from afar  
I come with secrets laden, I can tell  
To none but thee. So sweet my whispers are,  
That with their fragrance fill'd is every thought  
That I have breathed on. Maiden pure and fair,  
A paradise of perfumes I have brought  
That thy sweet soul may breathe in sweetest air.  
Ah, keep it! The Soul's Fragrance lost, can aught  
That loss repair?

## LINES\*

COMPOSED IN SLEEP.

---

THIS is the place. Here flourish'd Wicked Deeds  
And wither'd, in a world without a name,  
Buried ere ours was born. Fierce troops of Crimes  
Weapon'd and crown'd, athwart a desert land  
Of wasted loveliness, to reach this place  
Travell'd in pomp : here settled, and here died,

\* These lines are the result of a slumber, not induced by any narcotic, from which the writer awoke under an extraordinarily vivid impression that he had composed in his sleep a poem of considerable length. Of the purport of the poem he retained only a vague and shadowy notion ; but more than a hundred lines of it were lingering (as it seemed to him) so distinctly in his recollection that he hastened to write them down. His memory however (or the illusion which had usurped the function of memory) suddenly and completely failed him at the point where this fragment breaks off. He has never been able to complete it ; and it is printed here, without alteration, as a psychological curiosity.

Grown old and weak : and, dying left behind  
No chronicle upon the bare rock graven  
Of what they were or what they did. The lives  
They cramm'd with evil, all their wicked loves,  
Their wicked hates, Death and slow Time have turn'd  
Into a sly grey silent ghostliness,  
A stealthy-footed Fear, that prowls for prey,  
Creeps on the wretch who wanders here unwarn'd,  
Catches him, with long fingers, by the head,  
Nor lets him go till all his mind is gone.

This was their city's tower'd acropolis,  
This sprawling hoop of roofless ruin huge  
Whose heart is hollowness. These broken ribs  
Of crumbled stone and mounds of rippling grass  
Were walls whose builders, when those walls were  
built,  
Kings put to death, that none the plan might tell

Of secret chambers cruelly contrived  
For lust and murder : and therein were born  
Abominable pleasures. Round them now  
Rank ivy rustles with the revelry  
Of spangled reptiles. Down in a dry well  
There hath been dwelling for three thousand years  
An old white newt, whiter than leprosy.  
He only knows the long-forgotten names  
Of those strong scarlet blossoms on the brink  
That once were Sins. \* \* \* \* \*



## PROMETHEIA.

(FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS, ET CÆTERA.)

MEPHISTOPHELES (ad spectatores)

“ Am ende hängen wir doch ab  
 Von creaturen die wir machten.”—  
*Faust*.—Second Part. (Birth of the Homunculus.)

## PART I.

“ God of the Gods, and Lord of Heaven ! Since now  
 Repentant Power rejects not Reason’s use,  
 Here on the Path of Progress stay not thou  
 Thy steps by me well-counsell’d ! ” (Thus to Zeus  
 Prometheus spake.) “ From Earth’s primordial womb  
 Mute to the birth her progeny are brought.  
 To death they go, as into life they come,  
 Condemn’d to suffer all and utter nought.  
 Read in the language of their longing eyes  
 The passionate petition of the dumb,

And grant the long'd-for gift, mere life denies,  
A voice to Will, to Feeling, and to Thought ! ”

But Zeus, mistrustful, murmur'd “ To what end ? ”  
“ No end of ends,” he answer'd, “ and in each  
A fresh beginning ! for with better fraught  
Is every best, as world on world ascend,  
In ceaseless self-upliftings, life's immense  
Capacities of growth. Voice leads to speech,  
Speech to intelligence, intelligence  
To liberty, and liberty ” . . . . “ To what ? ”  
Zeus interrupted. “ Ever out of reach  
Thy thoughts run on, and all thy language still  
Sounds revolutionary.” “ Still ! why not ? ”  
Prometheus laugh'd. “ We share the imputed crime.  
From revolutionary fountains flow  
Fresh streams of force ; and, tho' enthroned sublime  
On spoil'd Olympus, what thyself wert thou  
Without the Revolution, Son of Time ? ”

“Titan,” the God, with darkening aspect, sigh’d,  
“It was to ravish, not retain, a throne  
That on the Revolution we relied ;  
Wherein thy services have every one  
Been well requited.” “Ay,” Prometheus cried,  
“Witness Mount Caucasus !” “What’s done is done,”  
Zeus answer’d. “Not till thou hadst turn’d our foe  
And filch’d our fire, did we retaliate thus.  
But witness also thou, that (long ago  
Recall’d with recompense from Caucasus)  
Thee hath our later friendship favour’d so,  
That thine is now copartnership with us  
In all our own Olympian empery,  
By thy weird wisdom guided. Why discuss  
The unalterable past ? Nor thou nor I  
Fresh conflict crave. This much concede.” “I do,”  
Prometheus mutter’d, “and the reason why  
Full well, Fate-driven Thunderer, I know !

For thy reluctant power perforce obeys  
The strict compulsions of Necessity.”  
“ Her iron yoke,” replied the God, “ she lays  
On Gods and Titans both, and none can close,  
None ope, her hidden hand. Forget the days  
That disunited us, nor indispose  
A confidence that fain would rest assured  
Rather in him sage Themis loves to praise,  
Than in the perjured Titan who abjured  
The cause of his own kindred.” “ And for whose,  
Ungrateful God ? ” “ Nay, my Prometheus, mine  
The cause, I know, for which thou didst change sides.”  
“ Not thine,” the indignant Titan cried, “ not thine !  
Nor thine nor thee, Monarch of Parricides  
From Sire to Son, I sought ! In god or worm  
I care not where the sign of it I see,  
But let me find, beneath the poorest germ,  
Some promise of improvement, that to free

A hinder'd progress to a higher term  
Needs all the aid a Titan can afford,  
And mine shall not be wanting to confirm  
The effort that aspires to overcome !”

Zeus, shaking his sheaved thunders at the word,  
Exclaim'd, “Inveterately venturesome !  
Whom should the upstart overcome ? Not me ?”  
“And why not thee,” Prometheus cried, “new lord  
Of a usurpt dominion ? Why not thee,  
Thee and thy kindred all, whose starry home  
To Kronos once belong'd, if its endeavour  
Of higher worth than thine and theirs should be ?  
Kronides, never have I flatter'd, never  
Deceived thee, or betray'd ! Forget not thou  
That in the Race of Uranus for ever  
Power hath been lost and won by overthrow.  
Unoverthrown, wouldst thou preserve it, dare  
To rule without oppression ! Fearless now,

Fling the lone scepter of a world-wide care  
Into the lap of Freedom ! Safest thus  
Shall its supremacy remain, for there  
Rebellion breathes not. Had not Kronos pent  
Our Giant Brotherhood in Tartarus,  
His might have been (thy treason to prevent)  
The hundred-handed help he lack'd of us.  
Confide in Liberty, the friend of all,  
And live by all befriended ! With her, grow  
From growth to growth, in a perpetual  
Increase of growing greatness ! So shalt thou,  
Still onward borne with all that's onward going,  
Be never by-gone, never out of date !  
'Tis at the price of ever greater growing  
Eternity is granted to the great."

Zeus answer'd with an indecisive sigh.

"Prophet," he said, "who, in the hoary Past

Where the old Gods and the old Ages lie,  
 Sole of thy kindred didst the hour forecast  
 Which thou alone survivest, prophecy  
 (If still the gift of prophecy thou hast)  
 What destiny for me, should I deny  
 The gift thou cravest, is reserved by Fate? ”  
 “The sadness of immense satiety,”  
 Prometheus murmur’d. “Pause and meditate!”  
 He added. “I, the Spokesman of the Dumb,  
 Am also Seer of the Unseen.” “But what,”  
 Zeus sigh’d again, “will they next crave, to whom  
 The voice to crave it hath been granted?” “That  
 Shall they themselves inform thee by and by,”  
 Exclaim’d the surly Giant, and thereat  
 His shoulders huge he shrugg’d.

Without reply

Zeus mused awhile ; but, spying Eros pass  
 Full-quiver’d for a chase of sweeter cry

Than Cynthia leads along the moonlit grass,  
When, thro' the rustling grove and glimpsing sky,  
Thin shadows, fast pursued by shadows, flee,  
The God, impatient, glanced at Earth's mute mass ;  
Then waved an acquiescent hand, as he  
Turn'd from the Titan with a faint " Alas,  
Prometheus, thou art compromising me ! "

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## PART II.

Leaving in haste the Olympian Council Hall,  
The apostate Titan down to Earth convey'd  
The grudged concession wrung from Zeus. There, all  
In conclave multitudinous array'd,  
His clients he together call'd (from man  
In fair Apollo's faultless image made,  
To man's close copy, made on the same plan,  
The flat-faced ape) and all the bars undid



Which had till then lock'd mercifully fast  
The innumerable voices that, unchid,  
Now into riotous utterance rush'd at last.

This done, preferring to appreciate  
The concert from a distance, he return'd  
To the Olympians—in whose looks irate  
A relisht indignation he discern'd.  
The Gods and Goddesses, the Demigods  
And Demigoddesses, all demi-nude,  
(As Classic Art's correctest periods  
Prescribed to each the appropriate attitude)  
Were listening, with more wonder than delight,  
To the new noisiness of earthly things.  
For quick and thick each animal appetite  
Throbb'd into sudden sound from the loud strings  
Of throats in thousands loosed ; and left and right  
Chirrupings, crowings, howlings, bellowings,  
And barkings—bass and treble of mingled mirth

And pain—were now profusely vomited  
In vehement hubbub from the vocal Earth.

Meanwhile, as with sloped shoulder, shuffling tread  
Evasive, mien morose, and furtive eye,  
Thro' Heaven's bright groups the burly Titan sped,  
Their comments were not complimentary.

“ Please to explain,” resentful Herè said,  
“ This new caprice, or stop that peacock's cry !

My bird will be a byword and a scoff

If this continues ! ” “ Ah, Fair Majesty,

This new caprice is an old debt paid off,”

Prometheus answer'd. “ Fops in pomp array'd

Must now reveal what's *in* them, to the ear,

Who, to the eye, have heretofore display'd

Only what's *on* them. But have thou no fear,

Thy favourite makes an admirable show—

From one so beautiful exact no more ! ”

Eos complain'd of the cock's clamorous crow,

Superfluously sounded o'er and o'er.

“Prometheus might at least,” she said, “for me

Have managed to contrive a less absurd

And indiscreetly strepitant minstrelsy

Than the loud shriek of that ridiculous bird !”

“Sweet Cousin, thine indulgence,” he replied,

“For the cicala’s strains (I grant that these

Have not as yet been duly deified)

Leaves to less plaintive notes small chance to please

An ear compassionately prejudiced.

Sleep sounder, and wake later ! What hath drawn

Thy blushing charms, untimely thus enticed,

O rosy-finger’d Daughter of the Dawn,

From that soft couch Love’s self were fain to lie on ?

Is it the memory of Cephalus,

Or else the expectation of Orion ?”

With jests sarcastic curtly answering thus

The just reproaches of the Gods, that great  
Ungainly Titan strode from spot to spot,  
Superbly heedless of the scorn and hate  
His course provoked. Olympus loved him not,  
Despite his ancient birth and lineage high ;  
And even the new-made Deities, whose past  
Was but of yesterday, with sidelong eye  
Look'd on him as a god of lower caste.  
The restless spirit that from his peers in Heaven  
Ever aloof the unquiet Giant held  
Had to his strenuous Titanism given  
A tone incongruously coarse. Impell'd  
By unintelligible vehemence,  
His uncouth grandeur grieved the fluent grace  
Of the Olympian Quiet with intense  
Abrupt explosive ardours ; as apace  
On its swift course, all rough with rocks and roots,  
And fiercely fluttering with volcanic fire,

Some ravaged morsel of a mountain shoots  
Across the cloven crystal of a lake  
In whose clear depths stars and still clouds admire  
The lucid forms their own reflections take.

Sole, Aphroditè (she, that Fairest Fair,  
Whose sacred sweetness from its rancorous tooth  
The Titan's biting wit was pleased to spare,  
—She for whose solitary sake, in truth,  
The sullen menace of his face at whiles  
A fond mysterious fervour unavow'd  
Made soft and luminous with hovering smiles,  
Like summer lightnings thro' a sleeping cloud)  
Sole, Aphroditè found a curious charm  
In this grim God-born Mocker of the Gods ;  
And, waving to Prometheus her white arm,  
She beckon'd him with amicable nods.  
Submissive to her signal he drew near,  
And with a questioning gaze the Goddess eyed.

“ ‘Titan, well done ! ” she whisper’d in his ear ;  
“ What long on Earth I miss’d thou hast supplied.  
I love the lion’s roar, the ring-dove’s coo :  
By both alike love’s needs are well express’d :  
The amorous bull’s deep bellowing charms me too.  
But why hast thou withheld the last and best  
Of all thy gifts from those who, tho’ but few,  
Most claim on thy solicitude possess’d ? ”  
Prometheus, by astonishment tongue-tied,  
An interrogatory eyebrow raised.  
“ Those larks and nightingales that yonder hide,”  
The Goddess answer’d as on Earth she gazed,  
“ Inaudible and invisible to all !  
Darkling they haunt the shadows round them furl’d,  
Silent amidst the universal brawl  
And babble of the emancipated world.  
Yet heaven is husht to hear their minstrelsy :  
For these the moon and stars are not too sweet,

For those the sun himself is not too high :  
And shall they have no listeners ? Hearts that beat  
With base emotions find ignoble voice,  
Wrath, and Unreason, and Vulgarly  
Speak loud. Stupidity and Spite rejoice  
In utterance unrestricted. Say, then, why  
(Where Folly's life with Envy's clarion vies)  
Must these alone, the darlings of the Spring,  
Whose souls are fill'd with lyric ecstasies,  
Unheard, or even if heard unheeded, sing ? ”

The Titan's eye, with a soul-searching glare,  
Sounded the secret dwelling undescried  
In those small bosoms. “ And what seest thou there ? ”  
The Goddess ask'd him. Sighing he replied  
“ What I should have foreseen ! ” “ But what is that ? ”  
Full on the glorious beauty of her face  
Prometheus gazed. “ O Goddess, ask not what !

Thou who, supreme in beauty and in grace,  
Art by adoring worlds proclaim'd divine,  
What kindred could thy confident godhood trace  
In a shy loveliness so unlike thine ?  
A loveliness of its own self afraid,  
A Bastard Beauty, fearing to be seen,  
Yet fainting to be loved, that seeks the shade ! ”  
The Goddess laugh'd “ What doth my Titan mean ?  
What bastard is he speaking of ? ” And he,  
“ Ay, 'tis a Beauty bastard-born, and not  
Authentically certified to be,  
A Beauty surreptitiously begot  
From Heaven's embrace of Earth, and breathing, see,  
Between them both in secrecy and shame  
An unacknowledged life ! ” “ But what,” said she,  
Is this poor Heaven-born Earth-child's luckless name ? ”  
“ Its name,” Prometheus sigh'd, “ is POESY.”  
“ A woman ? ” “ No.” “ A man, then ? ” “ Ah, still less ! ”



The glorious sexual Goddess blush'd outright,  
"Is Hermes, then, a father?" "Nay, my guess  
"Divines not Hermes." "Zeus, then? am I right?"  
"I doubt..." "If there's a doubt, 'tis Zeus! Suppress  
The father's name, however. Well we know  
The mother is the love-tale's text, of course,  
The father but the pretext. Name the mother!"  
"But thou wouldst not believe me..." "Worse  
and worse!"  
'Tis Herè, then?" "Not Herè." "There's no other  
Of whom the thing's incredible—unless  
Perchance 'tis Pallas?" "No alas, not she!"  
"And why alas?" With keen suggestiveness,  
For sole reply the 'Titan glowingly  
Gazed on the Goddess, till she blush'd again,  
"Matchless impertinent!" But he, unmoved,  
"Goddess, I warn'd thee that thou wouldst not deign  
To give me credit..." "For such pert unproved

Assertion? Fie, to say it to my face!"

"But I said nothing." "And yet all implied.

What next, I wonder!" "Queen of every grace

And all that's beautiful," Prometheus cried,

"Tell me *thy* parents!" "Known to all are they,

Zeus and Dione, both of them divine."

"They!" cried the Titan, "they thy parents? Nay,

Great and dear Goddess, beauty such as thine

Had nobler birth! Those stupid Gods are not

The true begetters of a deity

Above their own. 'Twas otherwise begot.

Slid from the starry bosom of the sky,

A single drop of sacred ichor pure,

The mystic blood of Uranus, contain'd

In one bright bead thy whole progeniture:

Hid in the heart of Ocean it remain'd

Till there it brought thy wondrous self to birth:

And, even so, one glimpse of Heaven unstain'd,

That fell reflected in a glance from Earth  
To Heaven uplifted, this new Beauty bore—  
Which hath no sex, no mother, and no sire,  
No kin on Earth, no home in Heaven—nay more,  
'Tis neither man nor woman, but the soul,  
Of the wide world's unsatisfied desire.  
And thro' the universe, without a goal,  
Its hungering heart must wander high and higher,  
Till from the Gods it gain (as I, for those  
Poor mortals yonder, snatch'd from Zeus his fire)  
The immortality they dread to lose."

"But this new Beauty, do those bosoms small  
Enshrine it?" ask'd the Goddess. "Ah, subdued,"  
Prometheus murmur'd bitterly, "by all  
The vulgar voices of the multitude  
That loves its own monopoly of noise,  
No homage hath the homeless one on Earth!  
And vainly its unanswer'd song employs

The gift I gave. In darkness and in dearth,  
By noise and glare engirt, unheard it sings,  
Unseen it stirs. For this, from Zeus I craved,  
What he denies me still, the gift of wings—  
For birds—birds only—that in some sweet bird  
Life's sweetest voice, from Earth's loud hubbub saved,  
Might soar in song to Heaven, and there be heard.  
Never while man breathes mortal breath shall he,  
The Earthborn, hand or foot from Earth withdraw :  
For there uplifted must his kingdom be  
By agelong labour. Language, there, and Law  
Hath he to found ; create, for social power  
And spacious trade, the Senate and the Mart ;  
Establish Science in her starry tower,  
And mint the glowing miracles of Art.  
Such is the task by me for man design'd !  
But ever, as on Earth his task he plies,  
Higher than foot and hand must heart and mind,

Uplifted o'er the earthly labour, rise.  
Let mind and heart, then, heavenward pathways find  
Upon the wings of every bird that flies,  
While hand and foot stay fast to Earth confined ;  
Lest Earth should haply lose her fairest prize,  
The hand of man : whose fingers five shall bind  
Together all that his five wits' rejoice  
To wrench from Time's tenacious treasures,  
As, guided onward by a wingèd voice,  
Earth's wingless lord to his high future hies !”

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## PART III.

The Titan quiver'd. Strenuous tremours ran  
Thro' his huge limbs, rocking their heaviness  
Like wind-rack'd oaks ; and his deep eyes began  
To glow with a prophetic passion. “ Yes !  
And then,” he murmur'd, “ then the Race of Man

(Taught by that wingèd voice) perchance may guess  
The giant purpose, the stupendous plan  
That, brooding o'er its cloudy cradle, I  
Have for the infant fashion'd. Changeless Gods,  
What profits you your immortality?  
Thro' endless self-repeating periods  
To be the same for ever, is to be  
For ever lacking life's divinest gift,  
The faculty of growth. No inch can ye  
Your future o'er your present selves uplift.  
What good in such prolong'd ineptitude?  
But to be ever growing young again,  
From age to age eternally renew'd  
With breath new-born, and ardour to attain  
Goals ever new, by courses never done,  
—This gift, to gods ungiven, or given in vain,  
My forethought hath reserved for man alone!  
Death was the blind condition jealous Zeus,

To balk my purpose, on mankind imposed,  
But Death my purpose serves : for Death renews  
Man's youth, whose course old age might else have  
closed.

Unprescient God, 'tis well thou couldst not guess  
That to these hands the fetter forged by thee  
Gave all required by their inventiveness  
To shape the sword that cuts each fetter free !  
MANKIND MUST DIE ! The fiat forth is gone.  
Die ? When I heard that word of doom proclaim'd,  
More self-restraint I needed to suppress  
A shout of joy, than when my strangled groan  
Burst not the bitten lips its anguish shamed,  
And not a cry revealed the dumb distress  
Of my Caucasian martyrdom. By Death  
The Race of Man shall be from age to age  
Replenisht with the perdurable breath  
Of endless birth, and vigour to engage

In ventures new. Death's sickle, as it reaps  
The old grain, to the young the soil restores,  
And still the harvest springs, and the soil keeps  
Still fresh for growth its disencumber'd pores.  
A man is dead, long live Mankind ! From soul  
To soul each life's acqurest triumphantly  
Passes in sure succession. Ages roll,  
And in a hundred ages (what care I  
How many births as many deaths succeed ?)  
Man's Race, enrich'd a hundredfold thereby,  
Remains as young as ever. Oft with heed  
Have I the Ocean watch'd, and watch'd the shore.  
The sand, rejected by the wave's wild shock,  
Gathers in heaps and, growing more and more,  
And high and higher, hardens till at last  
The wave returning breaks upon a rock,  
And is itself rejected. Tost and cast  
By Time's recurrent waves, son after sire,



From death to death, like that sea-driven sand,  
Grains of Humanity, with past on past  
Your greatening future pile, and high and higher,  
Based on each others' buried shoulders, stand !”

“ What art thou muttering ?” Aphroditè said.

“ Mysterious dreamer, dost thou meditate  
The Gods' destruction ? ” High his shaggy head

The Titan lifted, and replied elate,

“ Not thine, Anadyomenè, not thine !

Passion's imperishable autocrat,

Thee only of the Gods I deem divine,

And permanent is thy sweet power as Fate.

Receive mine oath, and aid me !”

“ How ? In what ?”

“ Inspire in Zeus the wish to be a bird

That he may woo a mortal.”

Letting fall  
Sweet lids o'er sunny eyes as this she heard,  
The Goddess smiled, and answer'd "Is that all?"

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## PART IV.

Pretentious patrons of mankind, what pranks  
However monstrous has your pride disdain'd  
For pushing forward its own purpose? Thanks  
To your activity, what tears have stain'd  
The trophies of man's progress! What a sea  
Of blood, to float your cockle-boats, been shed!  
Your fellow man from prejudice to free,  
Your fellow man's incorrigible head  
Have you chopp'd off with philanthropic glee,  
By basketfuls, benign Philanthropists!  
And, promising a better life instead,

This life have you, evangelising Priests,  
 With penance fill'd ! Your famed philosophies,  
 By way of throwing light on what men find  
 Compassionately dark, burn out their eyes,  
 Vaunting Philosophers ! In vain mankind  
 For refuge from its benefactors sighs.

His purposes humane the Titan's mind  
 Found less inhuman means to realise.  
 He merely made a god ridiculous.  
 When Zeus had, for the sake of Ganymede,  
 Assumed an eagle's form, succumbing thus  
 To Aphroditè's influence, thro' that deed  
 The Son of Asia and Iäpetus  
 His end attain'd. For how thenceforth could Zeus  
 (Plagued by the importunate solicitings  
 Of such a crafty counsellor) refuse  
 Even to the meanest bird a pair of wings ?

Promiscuous benefits can rarely claim  
A better origin. To elevate  
One favourite, lest it should incur the blame  
Of personal preference in affairs of State,  
Some dozen mediocrities as high  
The Crown must needs advance. If, still irate,  
'The Public Voice protests, to brave its cry  
There are at least thirteen instead of one :  
The wrong, moreover, that is done thereby  
To no one in particular is done :  
'Tis but a general calamity,  
And that is an indignity to none.

Yet vast and irremediable was  
The failure of Prometheus. From the day  
He universalised the voice, alas,  
Whilst every vulgar brute could say his say,  
To souls refined and delicate remain'd

No refuge from the hubbub all around  
But their own silence : and such souls refrain'd  
(Dumfounded quite by a disgust profound)  
From audible utterance. The loquacious zest  
Of Earth's coarse crowd had in the finer few  
Life's highest note unknowingly suppress'd.  
That was the Titan's first mistake. A new  
And worse one he fell into, in his quest  
Of means to mend it : for he did but brew  
A base resentment in the human breast  
By giving wings to birds. Man's envy drew  
Between the smallest sparrow and himself  
Comparisons, from one grudged point of view,  
Displeasing to the self-conceited elf.  
A third mistake Prometheus might have then  
Committed, and from Zeus in some weak mood  
The envied gift of wings for envious men  
Perchance obtain'd, had Man's Ingratitude

Not prematurely ended his career.

Mortals, and mortals to a man agreed  
In censuring all attempts to interfere  
With their mortality, men first decreed  
The Abolition of the Gods : and here,  
Prometheus held their sacrilegious deed  
Was justifiable, altho' severe :  
But men no sooner from the Gods were freed,  
Than of a Titan's aid so sure they were  
Their godless freedom had no further need,  
That they forthwith proclaim'd it everywhere  
Mankind's Titanic Patron had become  
To man no more than an enormous myth ;  
The monstrous trance of dreaming Heathendom,  
Not to be any longer trusted with  
Traditional influence on the human mind.  
Thus, having fail'd to benefit the few,  
And by the ungrateful multitude malign'd,

A sad self-exile, seeking to eschew  
The sight of his own failure in mankind,  
Prometheus from man's fatuous world withdrew.

But first to his lame brother he resign'd  
His slighted scepter. Epimetheus sought  
To avenge Prometheus, and rebuke men's blind  
Ingratitude for gifts that cost them nought.  
Strict penalties to granted prayers he join'd,  
And punish'd with a knowledge dearly bought  
The pride that had disdainfully declined  
Gratuitous instruction. *AFTERTHOUGHT*  
Succeeded *FORETHOUGHT* as the Ruling Power  
Of Progress, and the Race of Man was taught  
A painful prudence by Pandora's dower  
Of ever unanticipated woes  
From wishes born.

The formidable place  
Of his first martyrdom Prometheus chose  
For his last refuge from a thankless race.  
There, wandering far and farther out of sight,  
Along waste ways indefinite as those  
Traced by the shadows travelling in the flight  
Of silent clouds o'er solitary snows,  
"Rash Race of Suicides!" he mused in scorn,  
"You to your own precocious appetite  
Have fall'n a prey : your future yet unborn  
You have devour'd : and, fumbled ere unfurl'd,  
Broken is all its promise in the bud !  
No more can I redeem you from a world  
Where Genius, bringing fire, found only mud  
Wherefrom to make an image of itself.  
Ah, what to you is left for which to live,  
To toil, to suffer? Perishable pelf,  
Lust without love, coarse pleasures that contrive



Their own defeat, and joy that never stays !  
What with those aspirations will you do,  
Which should have been as pinions to upraise  
Humanity above the Gods ? Pursue  
The trivial tenour of your thankless days  
From things desired to things possess in vain,  
But there my gifts can aid you not, I know !  
Alas, and what will now be their worse pain,  
In whom those gifts their glowing poësies  
With aching pangs commingle ? Woe to you,  
Poor children of my frustrate enterprise !  
Poets, can you be silent ? ”

That austere  
And somber martyr's reminiscent eye  
Survey'd the snow-ribb'd crags around him there,  
And the lost Titan murmur'd, with a sigh  
Soon frozen in their freezing atmosphere,  
“ If not . . . well, learn to suffer, even as I ! ”

---

## A SIGH.

---

THE Passion and the pain of yore  
Slow time hath still'd in vain,  
Since all that I can feel no more  
I yearn to feel again.

---

## NECROMANCY.

---

WHY didst thou let me deem thee lost for years,  
Youth of my heart? And, now that I have shed  
O'er thy false grave long-since-forgotten tears,  
And put away my mourning for the dead,  
And learn'd to live without thee half content,  
What brings thee back alive, tho' in disguise?  
For thou, with this fair stranger's beauty blent,  
Art smiling on me thro' another's eyes.

---

## URIEL.

(A MYSTERY.)



## DEDICATION.

To you, the dead and gone, bright-eyed Desires  
 Whose beauty lights no more my dwindled day,  
 Here, sitting lone beside forsaken fires,  
     I dedicate this lay.



## I.

I HEARD a Voice by night, that call'd to me

“Uriel ! Uriel !”

The night was dark, and nothing could I see,

Yet knew I by the Voice that it was She

Whom my soul loves so well

That when She calls Her follower I must be,

Whether She call from Heaven or from Hell.

## 2.

Then to the Voice "What is thy will?" said I.  
But for sole response thro' the darkness fell,  
Repeated with the same importunate cry,  
Mine own name only, "Uriel! Uriel!"  
I could not sleep nor rest upon my bed,  
So I rose up, and thro' the husht house pass'd  
With steps unlighted (for my lamp was dead)  
Out on the heath.

## 3.

That Voice flew onward fast,  
Still calling, and still onward after it  
I follow'd, far outsped: for there, beneath  
The moonless heaven, not even a marsh-fire lit  
Night's fearful sameness; and athwart the heath,  
Not fast and free as flew the Voice that led,  
But halting oft, my steps went stumblingly.

Each footstep, as it fell, recoil'd with dread  
From what it toucht ; and, tho' I could not see,  
I felt that, where I trod, the plain was spread  
With corpses. Heap'd so thick they seem'd to be,  
That I, at every moment, fear'd to tread  
Upon a dead man's face. Yet, undeterr'd,  
My feet obey'd a will not mine, whose spell  
Their course constrain'd. For still that Voice I heard,  
And still the Voice call'd "Uriel ! Uriel !"

## 4

At last a livid light began to grow  
Low down in heaven. It was the moon that, pent  
Behind a slowly crumbling cloud till now,  
Athwart thin flakes of worn-out vapour sent  
A filmy gleam. And I could see thereby  
The corpses that lay litter'd on the heath.

Each white up-slanted face and unshut eye  
Was staring at me with the stare of death :  
Harness'd in rusty mail from head to heel  
Was each dead body : and each dead right hand  
Grasp'd by the hilt a blade of bloodstain'd steel,  
But broken was each blade. And, while I scann'd  
Those dead men's faces, I began to feel  
A sadness which I could not understand :  
But unto me it seem'd that I had seen,  
And known, and loved them, somewhere, long ago :  
Tho' when, or where, and all that was between  
That time and this (if what perplex'd me so  
With mimic memories had indeed once been)  
I knew no longer. On this fatal plain  
Vast battle must have once been waged, so keen  
That none was spared by the relentless foe  
For unmolested burial of the slain.

## 5.

And, as I gazed upon them, wondering why  
These unrememberable faces seem'd  
Mysteriously familiar to mine eye,  
The cloudy light that on their corselets gleam'd  
Grew clearer, and a sound began to swell  
Moaning along the heath : the swarthy sky  
Was scourged by a strong wind : the moonlight stream'd,  
Flooding the land : and on the dead men fell  
Its frigid splendour. Then stark upright rose  
Each dead man, shouting "Uriel ! Uriel !"  
And in the windy air aloft all those  
Arm'd corpses waved their shatter'd swords.

## 6.

I cried,  
"What are ye? and what name is it you bear?  
Corpses or ghosts? Is Life with Death allied,

To breed new horrors in this hideous lair  
Of Desolation?" And they all replied  
"Thine is our name, for thine our Legions were,  
And thine would still be, if thou hadst not died.  
But corpse or ghost thou art thyself, and how  
Should we thy death survive? It is not well  
When the dead do not know the dead, nor know  
The date of their own death-day, Uriel!  
Our leader bold in many a fight wast thou,  
And we fought bravely. But thy foes and ours  
Were strongest. And the strife is over now,  
And we be all dead men. And those tall towers  
We built are fallen, all our banners torn,  
All our swords broken, all our strong watch fires  
Quencht, and in death have we been left forlorn  
Of sepulture, tho' sons of princely sires,  
Born to find burial fair with saints and kings,  
Where, over trophied tombs, the taper shines



On tablets rich with votive offerings,  
And priestly perfumes soothe memorial shrines.  
And that is why we cannot find repose  
In the bare quiet of unburied death ;  
But ever, when at night the wild wind blows  
Upon the barren bosom of this heath,  
Our dead flesh tingles, and revives, and glows  
With the brief passion of a borrow'd breath,  
Breathed by the wind : and on as the wind goes  
Go with the wind we must, where'er that be,  
A lonesome pilgrimage along the night,  
Till the wind falls again, and with it we.  
Farewell ! ”

## 7.

The wild wind swept them from my sight  
Even as they spake, and all the heath was bare.  
Sighingly the wind ceased. The night was still.

The dead were gone. Only the moonlight there  
Upon the empty heath lay clear and chill.  
Then I remember'd long-forgotten things,  
And all my loss. I could no farther fare  
Along that haunted heath ; for my heart's strings  
Were aching, gnaw'd by an immense despair.  
Flat on the spot where last they stood I fell,  
And clutch'd the wither'd fern, as one that clings  
Fast to a grave where all he loved lies dead,  
And wept, and wept, and wept.

“ Rise Uriel,”

The Voice I knew still call'd, “and follow me !”  
But I could only weep, so vast a well  
Of tears within me flow'd. At last I said  
“ What heart or hope have I to follow thee ?  
Are not the Legions lost, that at thy call  
To mine own overthrow and theirs I led ?  
For I have seen again their faces all,  
And death was all I saw there.” “ Let them be ! ”

The Voice replied. "The dead shall live again  
When we have reach'd the goal whereto I go,  
And there shalt thou rejoin them. Nor till then  
Canst thou thyself return to life, for thou  
Thyself art also fall'n among the slain.  
But look upon me, faithless one, and know  
That I am life in death, and joy in pain,  
And light in darkness."

## 8

I look'd up, and saw,  
In glory that was not of mere moon light,  
(Glory that fill'd me with a great glad awe)  
Shining above me, Her my soul loves well,  
Like a white Angel. And along the night  
Her voice still call'd me "Uriel ! Uriel !"  
Again I follow'd. And it seem'd that days  
And nights, and weeks, and months, and years went by,

As on we went by never-ending ways  
Thro' worlds and worlds. And ever was mine eye  
Fixt on that beckoning Form with faithful gaze.  
And seasons little cared for—shine or shade,  
Or heat or cold—pursued us. Many a Spring,  
And many a Summer, many an Autumn, stay'd  
My panting path, and round me strove to fling  
Their fervid arms, and many a Winter made  
His frozen fingers meet and fiercely cling  
In lean embrace that long my course delay'd,  
And Pain and Pleasure both essay'd to wring  
My purpose from me. But still, sore afraid  
Lest I should lose my Guide by tarrying,  
Forward I press'd whenever the Voice said  
“Uriel! Uriel! linger not!”

9.

At last

We reach'd what seem'd the end of a dead world.

Wall'd round it was by mountains bare and vast,  
And thro' them one thin perilous pathway curl'd  
Into an unknown land of ice and snow,  
Where nothing lived, nor aught was left to freeze  
But frost. There was a heap of bones below ;  
Above, a flock of vultures. Under these,  
Hard by a stream that long had ceased to flow,  
A miserable, squalid, lean old man,  
Nursing a broken harp upon his knees,  
Sat in the frozen pass. His eyes were wan,  
But full of spiteful looks. She my soul loved,  
Fair as a skyward Seraph on the wing,  
Before me up that perilous pathway moved,  
Calling me from above, and beckoning.  
But he that sat before the pass began  
To twang his harp, which had but one shrill string,  
(Whose notes like icy needles thro' me ran)  
And with a crack'd and creaking voice to sing

“ O fool, infatuated fool, forbear !  
For yonder is the Land of Ice and Snow,  
And She is dead that beckoneth to thee there,  
And dead forever are the dead I know.”

Whilst thus that lean old man, with eyes aglare,  
Sang to his broken harp's one string below,  
The vultures scream'd above in the bleak air  
“ Dead are the dead forever !”

10.

“ What art thou,  
Malignant wretch ?” I cried. The old man said  
“ I am the Ancient Porter of this Pass,  
Beyond which lies the Land of Ice and Snow.  
And all the dwellers in that land are dead,  
And dead forever are the dead I know.  
And this, my harp—I know not when, alas !  
But all its strings were broken long ago,

Save one, which time makes tough. The others were  
Of sweeter tone, but this sounds more intense.  
And, for my name, some say it is Despair,  
And others say it is Experience."

Thereat he laugh'd, and shook his sordid rags,  
And his wan eyes with sullen malice gleam'd.  
And loud again, upon the icy crags,  
In that bleak air above, the vultures scream'd.

## S C O R N .



## I.

DIM on its slighted altar died  
The sacred fire no victim fed :  
The god, who craved a gift denied,  
His own dread image seized instead :  
And headlong he hurl'd it the flames among,  
Thus choosing rather self-immolation  
Than a form that in vain to a faithless throng  
From his shrine appeal'd for a grudged oblation.  
The flames around it wreathed :  
The image was consumed,  
And into ashes fell.  
The god upon them breathed,  
Their fading spark relumed,  
And utter'd this oracle :—



## 2.

“Go, dust wherein my power hath dwelt,

Avenge on man a wrong divine,

And the proud pain a god hath felt

In some poor human soul enshrine !”

The roused ashes arose and went forth on the wind :

The divinity hid in them, high and low

Hovering, sought where its force might find

Means to greaten, and grow, and glow.

A soul it found at last,

A great soul wrong'd by fame,

A grandeur grown forlorn :

Into that soul it past

Burningly, and became

Wrong'd Grandeur's angel, SCORN.

## S T R A N G E R S .

(A RHAPSODY.)



CHILDREN are born, about whose lucid brows  
The blue veins, visibly meandering, stream  
Transparent : children in whose wistful eyes  
Are looks like lost dumb creatures in a crowd,  
That roam, and search, and find not what they seek.  
These children are life's aliens. The wise nurse  
Shakes her head, murmuring "They will not live !"  
A piteous prophecy, yet best for them  
The death that, pitifully premature,  
Remits the pitiless penalty of birth ;  
Letting the lost ones steal away unhurt,  
Because unnoticed, from a world not theirs.  
  
Strangers and star-born strayaways forlorn,

Who come so careless of the outlandish wealth  
You carry with you, dropping as you go  
Treasures beyond the reach of Orient Kings,  
What seek you here where your unvalued gifts  
Shall leave you beggars for an alms denied?  
Earth yields not their equivalent. No field  
So profitless but some poor price it hath;  
A spurious picture or a spavin'd horse  
May find in time their willing purchasers;  
But never for its worth shall you exchange  
A soul's unmarketable opulence.  
And when at last, of those who (unenrich'd  
By your impoverishment) the gift forget,  
Your thirst and hunger crave a broken crust,  
A drop of water from the wayside well,  
Stripes shall correct such importunities.

Linger not ! live not ! give not ! Hide your gifts,  
Ungiven, deeper than Remembrance digs

Among the haunted ruins she explores  
For riches lost. And if abrupt mischance  
Their buried store reveal, without a blush  
Disown it, for a lie may sometimes save  
A miser's life. The truth would serve as well,  
Were truth not unbelievable ; for, stored  
In coin not current here and gems unprized,  
Your treasures are worth nothing to the wretch  
They tempt to make them, by a murder, his.  
But this the assassins know not, and ill-arm'd,  
Ill-arm'd and worse than weaponless, are you !  
To whose inefficacious grasp was given  
In solemn mockery the seraphic sword  
That only archangelic hands can hold.  
Your own have clutch'd it by the burning blade,  
And, when you wield it, 'tis yourselves you wound.

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You that have FEELING, think you to have all ?  
Poor fools, and you have absolutely nought !  
In reckonings of this world's arithmetic  
Everything else is something by itself,  
FEELING alone is nothing. Could you add  
That nothing to what counts for anything,  
Forthwith a tenfold potency perchance  
The unreckonable zero might bestow  
Upon the reckon'd unit. But what boots  
A value so vicarious ?

Yours the spell  
Whose all-transfiguring sorceries  
Convert the dust man grovels in to gold ;  
Robing the pauper royal in the pomp  
Of princely exultations, changing night  
To morning, death to life, the wilderness  
To paradise ; beatifying pain,  
Cleansing impurity, and strewing thick

The gulphs of Hell with starry gleams of Heaven.  
But use it not ! Unsanction'd miracles  
Are sentenced sins. Writ large for all to read,  
About the world's street corners Reason posts  
"BEWARE OF THE MIRACULOUS !" Whereto  
Prudence appends, the placard to complete,  
"MIRACLES ARE FORBIDDEN !" Use it not,  
Your gift unblest ! Lo, Virtue's High Priest comes,  
Calls the Sanhedrim's long-phylacteried train,  
Consults the scripted scrolls, within them finds  
No warrant for the wonders you perform,  
And them and you doth anathematise.

Linger not ! live not ! give not ! All your gifts  
Shall turn to stones and scourges in the hands  
That crave them, and to live is to be lost.

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Thou starry snowflake, whose still flight transforms  
The frozen crystal's constellated crown  
To an ethereal feather, seek not here,  
Celestial stranger, seek not here on earth,  
Where Purity were nameless but for thee,  
The warmth that wastes, the fervours that defile !  
Upon our wither'd branches hang not thou  
Thy votive wreaths, nor our bleak paths invest  
With thy pale presence ! Vainly dost thou cling  
About our fasten'd casements, vainly spread  
So close beside our doors thy spotless couch.  
Behind them dwells Ingratitude. The voice  
That welcomed thine arrival will anon  
Resent thy lingering, and exclaim " Enough ! "  
Trust not the looks that smile, the lips that sigh,  
" I love thee ! " For to-day those words mean " Come ! "  
To-morrow " Go ! " Men's words are numberless,  
And yet in man's speech only the same word

Means "No" to-morrow that meant "Yes" to-day.

Linger not, live not, give not, you forlorn  
 Gift-laden strangers ! With your gifts ungiven,  
 And so at least undesecrated, die !

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What fills with such invincibility  
 The frail seed striving thro' the stubborn soil ?  
 The sun so long one herbless spot caress'd,  
 That in the darkling germ beneath it stirr'd  
 A tender trouble, and that trouble seem'd  
 A promise. "Can it be, the Sun himself  
 Hath sought me ? He so glorious, he so great,  
 And I so dark, so insignificant !  
 Dear Sun, with all the strength thy love reveal'd,  
 Responding to thy summons, I am here !"



And the rich life of granaried Lybia glows  
Revelling already in a single grain.

Doth the Sun answer, " Little one, too much  
Thou hast responded, now respond no more " ?  
No, for throughout the illimitable heights  
And deeps of boundless Being, to attain  
It scarce suffices, at the most and best,  
To tend beyond the unattainable,  
And too much love is still not love enough.  
The Sun may set, but all his rising wrought  
To life's enraptured consciousness remains.  
The Sun disowns not, even when he deserts,  
What he put forth his fervours to evoke.  
Man's love alone its doing disavows,  
And makes denial of its dearest deed.

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Beneath a dead bird's long-uncared-for cage,  
That hangs forgotten in the cloister'd court  
Of some lone uninhabitable house,  
From the chink'd pavement slowly creeping comes  
A thin weak stem that opens like a heart,  
And puts forth tenderly two tiny hands  
Of benediction to that cage forlorn,  
'Then dies, as tho' its little life had done  
All it was born to do. The flint-set earth  
Requites the dead bird's gift—one casual seed,  
And from her stony breast a blossom blows.

But, pouring forth Uranian star-seed, strew  
Incipient heavens thro' all the hollowness  
Of human gratitude for gifts divine,  
And nothing from the sowing of such seed  
Shall blossom but the bitterness of death.

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O that the throbbing orb of this throng'd world,  
The sun-led seasons, the revolving years,  
Day with his glory, night with all her stars,  
The present, and the future, and the past,  
And earth, and heaven, should but a bauble be !  
The unvalued gift of an extravagant soul,  
Given undemanded, broken by a breath,  
The sport of one exorbitant desire,  
The easy spoil of one minute mischance,  
And all for nothing ! What ? the unheedful flint  
Spares room to house the blossom that requites  
A chance seed fallen from a dead bird's cage,  
And nothing, nothing, in the long long years,  
That bring to other losses soon or late  
The loss of loss remember'd, shall arise ?  
Nothing, not even a penitential tear,  
A fleeting sigh, a momentary smile,  
The benediction of a passing thought

Of pitiful remembrance—to repay

The quite-forgotten gift of too much love !

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All other loss comparison avails

To lessen, and all other ills worse ill

May mitigate. Defeated monarchs find

Cold comfort left in Cæsar's legions lost :

The ruin'd merchant in the bankrupt State :

The bedless beggar in the bed-rid lord.

The sight of Niobe dries many tears,

And by the side of open graves are graves

Long seal'd, like old wounds cicatrised by time.

But this is an immitigable ill,

A lastingly incomparable loss,

A forfeiture of refuge that exiles

Its victim even from the lonest lodge .

Where Misery's leprous outcasts may at least  
 Commiserate each other. The excess  
 Of one o'erweening moment hath usurpt  
 The whole dominion of eternity ;  
 Yet even the usurpation was a fraud,  
 For what seem'd all was nothing ; and its dupes,  
 Who mourn that moment's loss, have with it lost  
 The right to say that it was ever theirs.

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Sceptic, approach and, into this abysm  
 Of torment gazing, tremblingly believe !  
 Behold in Hell the soul's appalling proof  
 Of her dread immortality ! What else  
 Could for a moment undestroy'd endure  
 The least of such annihilating pangs ?  
 Transmute them into corporal sufferings. Hurl

'Their victim from the visionary top  
Of some sky'd tower, and on its flinted base  
Shatter his crumpled carcass : if the heart  
Still beats, lay bare each lacerated nerve  
And sear with scorching steel the sensitive flesh :  
Or lift the bleeding ruins of the wretch,  
Lay them in down, bandage with cruel care  
The broken limbs, and nurse to life again  
Their swooning anguish : then from eyes that burn  
Chase slumber, and to lips that parch deny  
Release from thirst. - It boots not ! Flesh and blood  
Death to his painless sanctuary takes,  
And life's material mechanism stops.  
'The first pang is the last. But all these pangs  
(And add to these what worse, if worse there be,  
'The torturer's teeming art hath yet devised)  
Attain not the tenth part of those endured  
Without cessation by the soul that loves,

When love is only suffering. What escape,  
What refuge, from self-torment hath the soul?  
Or what for love is left unoverthrown  
By love's own overthrow?

The growth of love,  
Outgrowing the wide girdle of the world,  
Hath in itself absorb'd sun, moon, and stars,  
Life, Death, and Thought's illimitable realm,  
Leaving in Time no moment, and in Space  
No point, its omnipresence kindles not  
To palpitant incandescence—and what then?  
A word, nay not so much, a breath unbreathed,  
A look, and all this universe of love,  
Cramm'd with the curse of Tantalus, becomes  
A pitiless infinitude of fierce  
Importunate impossibilities,  
Where nothing is but what may never be.

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Fond wretch, with those insatiable eyes,  
 Among the ruins of a world destroy'd  
 What art thou seeking? Its destroyer? Look!  
 He stands before thee. And thou knowst him not.  
 The traitor of thy perisht universe  
 Hath perisht with it. Nay, that world and he,  
 Whose creature and creator was thyself,  
 Save in thyself existed not. Away,  
 Disown'd survivor of what never was!

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There is a sigh that hath no audible sound,  
 And, like a ghost that hath no visible form,  
 Breathing unheard thro' solitudes unseen,



Its presence haunts the Desert of the Heart.

Fata Morgana ! Fair Enchantress, Queen

Of all that ever-quivering quietness,

There dost thou dreaming dwell, and there create

Those fervid desolations of delight,

Where dwell with thee the joys that never were !

And, when in darkness fades the phantom scene,

The wizard stars that nightly trembling light

That undiscover'd loneliness are looks

From eyes that love no longer. All the winds

That whisper there are breaths of broken vows

And perjured promises. The pale mirage

That haunts the simmering hyaline above

Is all the work of ghosts, and its bright wastes

Teem with fantastic specters of the swoons

Of prostrate passions, hopes become despairs,

And dreams of bliss unblest. In that weird sky

There is no peace, but a perpetual trance  
Of torturous ecstasy. Vext multitudes  
Of frantic apparitions mingle there,  
And part, and vanish, waving vaporous arms  
Of supplication—to each other lured,  
And by each other pantingly repulsed.  
The goblin picture of a passionate world  
Painted on nothingness ! And all the sands,  
Heaved by the sultry sighings of the heart  
Of this unquietable solitude,  
Are waves that everlastingly roll on  
O'er wrecks deep-sunken in a shoreless sea  
Whose bed is vast oblivion. Out of sight,  
Into that sea's abysmal bosom pour'd,  
Flow all desires unsatisfied, all pains  
Unpitied, all affections unfulfill'd,  
And sighs, and tears, and smiles misunderstood.

There all the adventurous argosies that sail'd

In search of undiscover'd worlds, reduced  
To undiscoverable wrecks, remain.  
And there perchance, at last, no more estranged  
From all around them, since not stranger they  
Than all things else, where all things else are strange,  
In that wide strangeness unrejected rest  
The world's rejected strangers—loves unloved,  
And lives unlived, and longings unappeased.

## ALLEGRO, ANDANTE, ADAGIO.



## I.

A SAGE had thro' the world fared far and wide :  
And what had made on him the most impression,  
Friends ask'd him : to whose question he replied  
By this confession :

## 2.

“ A traveller, whom it was my chance to meet  
Departing and arriving. For this man  
Mounted upon a fiery steed and fleet  
His way began ;

## 3.

And yet more eager even than his horse  
The man himself. With whip, and spur, and cry  
So fast he urged it on its rapid course  
That by and by

## 4.

The horse, o'er-ridden, on the road expired.  
To go afoot its rider was constrain'd ;  
But now the man, although himself untired,  
From haste refrain'd ;

## 5.

And, turning neither to the left nor right,  
He with deliberate stride began to wend  
Right onward, resolute to reach ere night  
His journey's end.

## 6.

A peasant proffer'd him an ass for sale :  
That mode of travelling seem'd not to his mind :  
Scornful he scann'd the beast from head to tail—  
'Twas lame and blind :

## 7.

But, since no better means remain'd, he bought  
And mounted it. The ass at a snail's pace  
Jogg'd onward awkwardly, not caring aught  
For speed or grace ;

## 8.

Yet, all ungoaded, ere the day was done  
It brought the traveller to his place of rest.  
'Twas there I met him, when the sinking sun  
Was in the west.

## 9.

Mean was the hostel, but of wide resort.  
He ask'd me how 'twas named, then sigh'd 'Already ?'  
As tho' to him the journey seem'd too short,  
The pace too steady.

## 10.

Whereat I marvell'd that a man who show'd  
Such haste at starting, and arrived so late,  
Should sigh to quit the sorry beast he rode,  
When reach'd the gate."

## 11.

The listeners, when this trivial tale they heard,  
Found nothing in it to impress their mind :  
For such things happen daily, they averr'd,  
To all mankind.

## 12.

" And for that reason, and because you say  
That such things happen in the common range  
Of every man's experience every day,  
I find it strange,"

## 14.

The Sage replied, " Upon his journey bound,  
That traveller started on a steed all fire  
And mettle ; yet too slow its pace he found  
For his desire ;

## 15.

And when, no longer by his courser carried  
In headlong haste, but free to pause or stray,  
He might have sometimes turn'd aside, or tarried  
To admire the way,

## 16.

Less haste was not more leisure : the man still  
Kept the main road, nor paused to pluck a flower,  
Or snatch a solace from the wayside rill,  
The woodland bower ;



## 17.

Desiring only ere the day was done  
To reach, tho' with diminisht speed at best,  
By pertinaciously still plodding on,  
His destined rest :

## 18.

Yet when his sole means left were those combining  
The sloth and weakness of a grizzled ass,  
He found the pace too swift, and sigh'd, repining,  
' So soon ? Alas ! ' "

## 19.

" Your traveller was a fool," the listeners cried,  
" But what of that ? 'Tis nothing strange or new."  
" My traveller was a man," the Sage replied,  
" Like all of you."

## 20.

“For some of you are riding,” said the Sage,  
“A swift horse, your still swifter spirits spurn :  
And some an ass : some walk. Youth, Manhood, Age,  
Each in its turn,

## 21.

Are but the means that bring man, slow or fast,  
Whither he grieves to be. The slowest pace  
He finds the swiftest, as he nears at last  
His resting place.

## 22.

And only one of all the things I’ve seen  
More moves my wonder than this traveller’s lot.”  
“And what is that ?” they ask’d. “Yourselves,  
I ween,  
Who wonder not.”

THE END.











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